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BIBLE HISTORY.

A Text-Book

FOR SCHOOLS AND BIBLE CLASSES.

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INTRODUCTION.

1. Sacred history is that series of events in which the grace of God and the free will of man work together for the accomplishment of the divine purpose. It begins with God's work of creation, it continues so long as God influences the progress of the creature by means of revelation; it reaches its goal in the full unfolding and accomplishment of the divine purpose.—Eph. i. 10, 11.

2. The distinguishing characteristic of sacred history is God's progressive revelation of Himself.

There are three special forms of revelation in sacred history:—*Theophanies*, or appearances of God in human form, which reached their highest perfection in the Incarnation; *Miracles*, testifying by deed to the working of the divine power in history; and *Prophecy*, testifying in word to the working of the divine knowledge in history, and throwing the light both of past and future upon the position and work of the age in which it is given, and of every later age of similar circumstances, wants, and destiny.

Sacred history is also characterized by *Types*. As it is a history that advances by various steps of development to a fixed goal, it has at each stage manifestations of God's working, which are embodiments, suitable to that particular stage in which they occur, of the same idea that is to be fully manifested at last, and are therefore types of future perfection; so that at every stage the final goal is more distinctly foreseen. For example, whenever a man of God furthers the advancement of the kingdom of God, he is for his own time an image of Him who is to bring all things to their perfection. In the same way, all historical events, ordinances, and institutions, which are of importance in the furthering of the kingdom of God, are types of future facts of salvation in its perfection.

3. Sacred history can be rightly known only from a sacred source, such as we have in the Scriptures, which, while written by men and for men, and thus bearing throughout a human character, bear, at the same time, a truly divine character; for the Spirit of God so wrought on the minds of those who wrote them, as to inform them by prophetic insight of what lay beyond the sphere of human knowledge, and to enable them in other things to distinguish the true from the false.

4. Sacred History begins with the creation of the earth and its inhabitant—man, and ends with the perfecting of man and his dwelling-place by resurrection and judgment. It includes two courses of development: the original course, which began with the creation, and was broken off by the Fall; and the new course, begun under the decree of redemption, and carried to its completion by continuous divine revelation. The goal of the latter is salvation in Christ, for which the old covenant prepared

the way, and which was carried out and appropriated in the new.

Part I.

THE CREATION AND THE FALL.

1. IN the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth is represented in the narrative of creation as at first waste and empty, a dark fluid mass. But the Spirit of God is already brooding on the waters, imparting fruitfulness and life; and in six days the formation of the present earth and its belongings is accomplished by the almighty word of God. The work is completed by the creation of the first human pair on the sixth day. Then God looked on all that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. On the seventh day He rested from all His works, and hallowed it to be a rest-day for man.—Gen i.; Ps. civ.

2. God made man of the dust of the ground, and breathed His own living breath into his nostrils, and so man became a living soul. Thus he has a twofold origin: in body and soul he belongs to nature, to the animal world; but in so far as there dwells in him a God-like spirit, the breath of God, he is of divine descent (Acts xvii. 28, 29) and has the image of God impressed upon him. His thus bearing the divine image fitted him to be the representative of God on earth in the dominion over nature with which he was entrusted. It renders him capable also of becoming like God in holiness and blessedness, wisdom, power, and glory, so far as the limitation of his created nature allows.—Gen. i. 26, 27; ii. 4-7.

God prepared, as man's first dwelling place, a garden in the land of Eden. The work set before him was to subdue the whole earth. He must begin this work where God first placed him. Hence his first appointed task is to dress and keep the garden of Eden, carrying on the work begun by God (ii. 8). But as God had bid him fill the whole earth (i. 28), this work was doubtless not to be limited to paradise, but to spread in ever widening circles over the earth, and make it all a paradise.—Gen. ii. 8-15.

3. Man was not placed at his creation on the highest step of development of which he was capable, and for which God destined him; but everything that he was to become lay in him in germ. Raised by his god-like spirit above the level of the natural world, he could not grow like a plant. His growth must be carried on by his own free choice and action; which implies that it is possible for him to choose a different course of development from that which God intended and fitted him to pursue. God can permit him thus to choose, without giving up His purposes for the race, because in the eternal decree of His wisdom and grace He has provided a way for the restoration of the fallen. Opportunity for free growth in holiness is afforded to man by the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the command not to eat of it, accompanied by the threat of death as the punishment of disobedience. The presentation and naming of the beasts affords him occasion for growth in wisdom and knowledge, as well as in the power of speech. This transaction is also the first act of homage from his subjects, the actual assumption of his dominion over the creatures, and therefore the first unfolding of the authority given him by his possession of the image of God. It awakens

in him, besides, the desire for a help meet for him, a desire which God meets by the formation of the woman.—Gen. ii. 16 ff.

4. But there already exists a created being who has fallen away from his Maker, and seeks in opposition to Him to destroy His work and frustrate His purposes of love. He appears to man in the form of the subtlest of the beasts of the field, to tempt him away from his God. First, he raises a doubt of God's word; then he directly charges God with falsehood; and at last he puts forth his strength in the deceitful promise: "Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Man allowed himself to be ensnared. Ungodly lust was planted in his soul by the tempter's words, and brought forth sin: the woman took of the forbidden fruit and ate, and gave also to her husband and he ate.—Gen. iii. 1-6; James i. 16; 1 John ii. 16.

5. What the tempter promised came to pass, but not as man had understood it. The eyes of the man and the woman were opened, but they saw only their nakedness and their misery. They became as God; man ceased, that is to say, to be God's representative, and became his own master; but such a likeness to God as this did not make him blessed like God; it plunged him into misery. He knew good and evil, but the former in the unhappy want of it, the latter in the painful experience of it and its consequences. But the tempter's subtlety is caught in its own net. In his equivocal words he has prophesied his own destruction. For redemption followed upon the fall, and in it God became as man, that man might truly and in the full sense become as God.—Gen. iii. 7; John xvii. 11, 21, 23; 2 Pet. i. 4; 1 John iii. 2; 1 Cor. xv. 49.

The judicial trial which follows brings out God's long-

suffering and the evil conscience of man. Adam throws the blame upon the woman, the woman on the serpent. The curse falls upon the serpent as the instrument of the temptation, and in it upon the tempter himself. Upon man comes from all sides want, pain, and sorrow, and after all his toil and labour, death. Nature itself shares the curse of man's sin ; "thorns and thistles shall the ground bring forth;" and the creatures doubtless felt the destructive influence of the fall of their master. Besides all this, God drove man from the garden of Eden, and placed at the entrance of the garden, to keep the way of the tree of life, the cherubim and the flame of the brandished sword, a symbol of the divine holiness in its wrathful, punishing aspect.—Gen. iii. 8 ff.

Part II.

REDEMPTION AND SALVATION.

DIV. I.—THE PREPARATION FOR SALVATION.

6. From all eternity God in His omniscience foresaw the fall of man, but that did not prevent Him from creating man, for from all eternity He had also resolved to redeem fallen man. After the fall, therefore, this purpose begins to operate in history. The first expression of it is the promise of the seed of the woman who is to bruise the serpent's head. Though man has let himself be drawn into fellowship with Satan, this fellowship shall not endure. There shall be enmity and continual warfare between the two, which shall end with the complete conquest

of the tempter. It is not yet said that one man, who is in a special sense the seed of the woman and the son of man, is to be the victorious captain in this struggle—victorious, because in him the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells—but this comes out more and more clearly in the course of revelation. For redemption cannot be carried out at once. Man must be prepared for salvation, by having the sense of sinfulness and misery, and the longing for redemption, thoroughly roused in him. And salvation must be prepared for man, by growing as the plant grows from the living germ to the finished flower and fruit. The evil, too, which has entered into the world must come out in its true colours, and ripen for judgment and destruction. So that along with the seed of salvation the tares which the enemy has sown are growing up in the world, and bearing their fruit for the day of separation. .

First Period of Preparation.

FROM THE FALL TO THE FLOOD.

(To 1656 after the Creation.)

7. Two classes of men—those who submit themselves in faith to God, and those who obstinately keep aloof from Him—appear at once in the two first sons of the first human pair. They both sacrifice, Abel of his flock, Cain of his fruit. Abel's bloody offering, offered in faith (Heb. xi. 4), from a deep sense of need, is graciously accepted by God, while Cain's is rejected. Cain's jealousy aroused, he becomes the murderer of his brother, and brings

down a curse on his own head. His descendants found the kingdom of the world in opposition to the kingdom of God, invent arts and luxuries, deify themselves and their ancestors. Seth, on the other hand, becomes, in place of Abel, the father of the children of God who abide in faith. Of these there were till the flood ten generations, who were the salt of the earth. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, because he lived a godly life, was taken away by faith that he should not see death (Heb. xi. 5).—Gen. iv., v.

8. But with the growth of the human race grows also their forgetfulness of God. Unequal marriages between the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men" bring the evil to a height. Destruction is threatened, but 120 years' grace is still allowed. Still the corruption is not checked, but spreads more widely, until at last but one man is found who, with his house, leads a godly life. Him the Lord will save from the impending judgment, that he may be the founder of a new race of men, and begin anew the history of salvation. Noah builds the ark at God's command, a visible call to others to repent, but they considered not until the flood came and took them all away. Noah entered into the ark with all his family, and with some of every kind of beast, and the Lord shut him in. Then the flood began, the fountains of the great deep broke up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and it rained forty days and nights. The water rose fifteen yards above the mountains, and every thing that lived on the dry land died. The flood lasted a whole year. Gen. vi.

Second Period.**FROM THE FLOOD TO THE CALL OF ABRAHAM.**

(1656-2083 *after the Creation.*)

9. As soon as Noah came out of the ark he built an altar, and offered sacrifice to God, confessing sinfulness, and expressing the hope of redemption. A promise, full of mercy and long-suffering, is given, that the earth shall not again be cursed because of man's sin. Sin is placed henceforth under the forbearance of God (Rom. iii. 25), until grace has accomplished all that it has purposed for man's redemption. The blessing given in paradise, and the dominion over the creatures is renewed. The rainbow is made the sign of the renewed covenant.—Gen. viii.-ix. 17.

10. The characteristic dispositions of Noah's three sons, as manifested in their treatment of their father in his shame, call forth from Noah the prophecy that from Shem's race the promised salvation is to be expected, and that Japhet's descendants shall partake of it, while on Ham as yet only a curse is pronounced.—Gen. ix. 18-29

11. The descendants of Noah, in prospect of an approaching dispersion on account of their increase in number, seek to form for themselves a point of union, and putting all their force together, bid defiance to Heaven. But the Lord destroys the bond of a common language, which was the condition of their common action. From henceforth they are scattered, walking in their own ways, while none of them is lost or forgotten (Gen. x.), until they meet again in the cross, and the severed languages are again united by the Spirit on the day of Pentecost.—Gen. xi.

10 THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

The children of Japhet spread mainly towards the north, and peopled the north of Asia and all Europe. To this day the blessing of Noah, "God shall enlarge Japheth," bears its fruit in the impulse of his descendants to colonization. The children of Ham spread chiefly towards the south, and peopled the southern peninsulas of Asia and all Africa. The race of Shem took root in Central Asia, and spread east and west. In it the line of the promised seed was carried forward, and numbered again during this period ten generations. But corruption spread even into it ere the period closed, for Terah, Abram's father, was a worshipper of idols (Josh. xxiv. 2, 14).—Gen. x.

Third Period.

FROM THE CALL OF ABRAHAM TO THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

(2083-4225 *after the Creation.*)

12. As the human race is now broken up into a multiplicity of nations, strangers for the present to the saving purpose of God, the preparation for salvation enters on a different course from that followed in the two former periods. One man and his descendants become the recipients of all the revelations and institutions that concern the future salvation, while the other nations are walking in their own ways. Among the Jews salvation is prepared for men; in heathenism men are prepared for salvation, for, left to their own power and wisdom, they are brought at last to feel their spiritual helplessness.

FIRST EPOCH.—*The Time of the Patriarchs.*

13. This is the time of Israel's infancy, in which the single twig broken off the tree of the Semitic race, and transplanted into the land of promise, takes root there, and, cleansed from all side-growths, shoots up in one stem, and separates into twelve great branches. There are two points round which the revelations of God and the hopes of the chosen family are concentrated: the seed of promise and the land of promise. In the latter, which, from its being separated from other lands, and yet possessing a central position among them, was well fitted to be the quiet nursery of the kingdom of God, and then to be the centre of its extension when it had come to maturity, the promised seed must be born, and the history of Israel pass the time of its childhood, that it may recognise it for its home. Their knowing it at first only as a land of sojourn, and then having to leave it for 400 years, has a deep significance; for by the former their faith in the promise that they shall possess it is drawn out and strengthened; by the latter they are tested and trained.

14. Abram, who is to be the father of the new race, is called by God, when he is seventy-five years old, to separate from the family and people of which he has hitherto been a member, and receives the promise that he shall become a great nation, and that in him all nations of the earth shall be blessed. He obeyed the call, and when he was come to the land which God had appointed for his seed, he received this other promise: "Unto thy seed will I give this land." Driven by a famine into Egypt, he is in danger of losing his wife, whom he has declared to be his sister, and whom there-

fore Pharaoh calls to his court. But God compels Pharaoh, by great plagues, to give her back.—Gen. xii.

15. As the destined possessor of the land, Abram avenges the violation of it by Chedorlaomer and the allied kings. As he returns from his victorious pursuit, Melchizedek, the last and highest fruit of the old dispensation, gives his blessing to Abraham, the beginner of the new, and receives in turn a tribute of tithes from him.—Gen. xiv.

16. The promise of a seed was not yet fulfilled, but Abram believed the word of the Lord. For the confirmation of his faith the Lord, after describing to him the course which the fulfilment of the promise must follow, enters into a bond of covenant with Abram, in ratification of which he causes the glory of the Lord to pass between the parts of the divided sacrifice.—Gen. xv.

Sarah at last despairs of becoming the mother of the promised seed. She therefore urges upon Abram to take her Egyptian maid Hagar as his concubine. Hagar, full of pride, and rebuked by Sarah, fled, but was brought back by the angel of the Lord, and bare Ishmael.—Gen. xvi.

17. The covenant is completed when Abram is ninety-nine years old, by his taking its obligations on himself and his seed, under the sign of circumcision. This completion is accompanied by a change of the names both of Abram and his wife, and by a distinct promise that within a year the heir of the covenant blessings should be born of Sarah.—Gen. xvii.

18. Sarah's faith, too, must be called forth ere she becomes the mother of the promised seed (Heb. xi. 11) When the promise is first directly addressed to her that she shall have a son, she laughs. But at length, reminded of the almighty power of God, who gives the promise,

she becomes ashamed of her laughter, and is thus led on to faith.—Gen. xviii. 1-15.

19. At length Isaac, the son of the promise, is born, when Abraham is a hundred years old and Sarah ninety—a type and pledge of the birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary (Rom. iv. 19). After his birth Ishmael mocks him, and is driven from the household of Abraham. He dwelt in the desert, and became the father of twelve Arabian princes.—Gen. xxi.

But Abraham must be ready to give up not only the son of the bond-woman, but even the son of the promise to death. At God's command he takes him to the land of Moriah, and prepares to offer him as a burnt-offering there. He has already taken up the knife to slay his son, when the voice of God prevents him, and the ram is offered in place of his son. Abraham gets back his son as a gift of God's grace, and receives a solemn renewal of the former promises.—Gen. xxii.

20. Trusting to these promises, and believing that his seed shall possess the land in which he is a stranger, Abraham makes a formal purchase of a burying place in the land. There he buries Sarah, and there, when he himself is dead, at the age of 175 years, his sons Isaac and Ishmael lay him beside her.—Gen. xxiii., xxiv. 7-10.

21. Abraham had sought a wife for Isaac of his kindred, the children of his brother Nahor. Of her twin children Jacob, the younger, is chosen of the Lord as the heir of the promise, even before his birth. Esau the elder becomes a hunter, and is his father's joy; Jacob remains in the tent, and is his mother's darling. The rough Esau sells his birthright to the cunning and calculating Jacob for a mess of pottage, and allies himself with the inhabitants of the land.—Gen. xxiv., xxv. 19.

Yet Isaac, when he is old, seeks to confer on Esau the patriarchal blessing. God's purpose, however, is carried out in the midst of much human cunning and sin. Jacob, feigning to be Esau, presents himself for the blessing, and receives it to the full.—Gen. xxvii.

22. He flees then to Mesopotamia from his brother's vengeance, alone, but not forgotten by the Lord, who appears to him by the way, and gives him the blessing from His own mouth. Jacob vows that if God preserve him and bring him back in peace, the Lord shall be his God, and the place where He has appeared to him shall be a house of God (Bethel). In Haran he meets with Rachel, the daughter of Laban, and serves her father for her seven years. Laban deceives him as he had deceived his father, giving him Leah instead of Rachel. Jacob has to serve other seven years for her, and six years besides for his reward of cattle. But God stands by him throughout, enriching him with sons and with great wealth of flocks and herds. Laban's avarice and jealousy drives him at last to flight, but God forbids Laban to do him any hurt, and sends, as it were, an embassy of angels to meet him on the borders of the promised land, and assure him of the divine protection.—Gen. xxviii.-xxxi.

23. Jacob at last gives God the glory, and confesses that he is not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth that God has shewn him. Still he has the anger of the Lord because of the deceitfulness and sin of his past life to overcome, before he can enter the promised land, or look for God's protection against Esau his brother, whose vengeance he still fears, and seeks to appease by gifts. The Lord himself meets him as an adversary. Jacob wrestles with Him, first in his own natural strength, and then, when the Lord has broken

that by touching the hollow of his thigh, with the spiritual weapon of prayer and supplication (Hosea xii. 4). By this he overcomes and comes out of the contest with the Lord's blessing on him, a new man with a new nature and a new name.—Gen. xxxii.

Esau then meets him, but friendly and reconciled. Jacob settles first in Shechem, but afterwards at God's command he removes to Bethel, and after cleansing his household from the idolatry they had brought with them from Mesopotamia, fulfils his vow by erecting an altar, and establishing the worship of God.—Gen. xxxiii.

24. In his old age Joseph becomes his best-beloved and cherished son. He draws on himself the hatred of his brethren, by telling his father where there was an evil report against them. Through their envy he is sold as a slave into Egypt. His honesty and uprightness gain him the confidence of his master. On a false accusation he is thrown into prison, but his service there is for him the path to honour. Having truly interpreted the dreams of his fellow-prisoners, Pharaoh's servants, he is called to interpret the dreams of Pharaoh himself. Pharaoh perceives that the Spirit of God dwells in him, and raises him to the highest position in his kingdom, with authority to prepare for the impending famine which the dreams foretold. The famine extends to Canaan, and Joseph's brethren come to him to buy corn for their households. He recognises them, but seeks, by proving them, to bring them to repentance. He bids them bring Benjamin with them when they next return, and, making it appear that he has been guilty of theft, proposes to keep him as a slave, to see whether they would still be as unfeeling towards Benjamin as they had formerly been towards himself. They stand the test; they confess frankly that

God has found out their iniquity, and express in their penitence deep sympathy with their father's grey hairs, and love to their young brother. Then Joseph makes himself known to his brethren.—Gen. xxxvii.-xlv.

25. Jacob and all his family—seventy souls, besides their wives and servants—are sent for into Egypt, and go to sojourn there. The Lord sanctions their removal, for it is His purpose to keep them a separate race while they are growing into a nation, and to make their sojourn in Egypt a special means of training them for their future destiny. Shortly before his death, Jacob adopted as his own the two sons of Joseph, thus conferring upon him the rights of the first-born, and in faith providing for his sons something better than Egyptian glory. On his death-bed he gathered his sons around him and blessed each one, assigning to Judah the chief authority among them, and the blessing of the Messianic promise. He dies at the age of 147 years, and, according to his believing desire, his body is buried in his father's burying-place in the land of Canaan.—Gen. xlv.-l.

SECOND EPOCH.—*Moses and the giving of the Law.*

(*A period of 200 years.*)

26. During the 430 years' sojourn in Egypt, Israel grew to be a people of 600,000 fighting men (about two and a half million souls in all). The Egyptians sought to check their growth by severe oppression and slavery, "but the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." Thus in Egypt the chosen family grew into a nation.—Exod. i.

The Exodus from Egypt is the birth of Israel as a nation, giving it a place among the other nations of the

earth. The giving of the law raises it to a higher rank as the peculiar people of the Lord, and is, as it were, its new birth. The law is a fence, separating Israel from other nations; for Israel itself it is a schoolmaster to bring to Christ, and has the shadow of good things to come.

27. Moses, the Lord's instrument in these transactions, the Mediator of the old covenant, as Christ is of the new, is brought up for forty years in Pharaoh's house in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, but "by faith he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God." Without a call from God he seeks to avenge the oppression of his people, but is humbled, and driven into the wilderness to go through forty years' training there. At length on Mount Horeb, the Lord appears to him in the burning bush—a significant emblem of what the people of Israel is to become on that same mountain when the glory of the Lord comes down to dwell among them—and sends him to be the deliverer of the people, overcoming his reluctance and fears by an appeal to the great name Jehovah, by furnishing him with signs of God's presence and power, and by associating with him his brother Aaron as spokesman.—Exod. ii.-vi.

28. Moses and Aaron demand of Pharaoh, in the name of the Lord, that he should let Israel go (for God does not make the heaviest demand of him at once). But the only result of the first message is increased oppression; Pharaoh is only to be moved by an outstretched arm and great judgments. God hardens his heart because he has hardened himself against His will, and since His grace cannot be magnified in him, His anger must. Therefore the nine first plagues are without effect. Not until all the first-born of man and beast among the Egyptians are

slain are Pharaoh and his people moved, not merely to let the Israelites go, but to drive them away in haste. None of the ten plagues touched the Israelites, not even the last. In the blood of the Paschal Lamb an atonement was made for them, and under cover of its blood sprinkled on their doorposts, their first-born were safe from the destroying angel.—Exod. vii.-xii.

29. After partaking of the Paschal feast they march out of Egypt, rich with the wealth which the Egyptians have given them for the asking, and take the way through the wilderness towards Mount Sinai, where God was to speak with them. But at the command of the Lord, who guides them Himself in the pillar of cloud and fire, they turn from the ordinary path and follow the western coast of the Red Sea. The news of this unexpected turn renews and completes Pharaoh's hardening. He follows them to compel them to come back, saying that the wilderness has shut them in. Pursued by Pharaoh and his host, they come at last to a point where they are hemmed in between the sea, and the hills, and the Egyptians. Their help comes from above. The Lord divides the sea, so that they march through it on dry land. Their blinded enemies, pursuing them, are buried in its waters, while the Israelites, safe on the other side, sing a triumphant song of praise.—Exod. xiii.-xv.

They now march on to Sinai, along the eastern coast of the sea. In the wilderness of Sin they already begin to long for the fleshpots of Egypt; the Lord gives them quails and manna, and water flows for them from a rock. The Amalekites, too, fall upon them there. Joshua leads out the army to the fight, Moses holds up on the hill the rod of God as a standard and a pledge of victory, and in the

strength of the Lord the enemy are driven back.—Exod. xvi-xviii.

30. As soon as the people arrived at Sinai, in the third month after the Exodus, Moses went up into the mount, and received from the Lord the preliminaries of the covenant. The people agreed to these ; and on the third day the Lord descended upon the mount in fire and gave the Ten Commandments, the brief summary of the whole law. When the people heard the thunder and the sound of the trumpet, and saw the mountain smoking, they said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear ; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Moses then built an altar, sacrificed on it, and sprinkled it with blood. When he had read the book of the covenant, and the people had promised to obey, he sprinkled also the book and all the people with blood. Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up into the mount and saw the God of Israel ; and when they had seen Him they ate and drank in a covenant feast.—Exod. xix., xx., xxiv.

31. Moses remains with the Lord on the mount, and the people grow weary of waiting for him. On their demanding gods to go before them, Aaron makes a golden calf, and calls the people to a feast in its honour. The Lord then calls on Moses to go down and let Him alone, that He may consume the people in His wrath, and make of him a great nation. But Moses, as mediator for the people, lets Him not alone, and appeals to His oath and covenant with their fathers. Then the Lord repents Him of the evil which He thought to do to His people.

When Moses goes down and sees how the people have broken their covenant with the Lord, he dashes to pieces in his indignation the tables of the law, the memorials of

their covenant. He calls for vengeance upon the idolaters, and the tribe of Levi gather on his side and slay 3000 of their brethren, washing off by their willing obedience Jacob's curse upon their house. On the people's repentance, Moses makes atonement for them, ascends again into the mount, and returns after forty days with the tables of the law renewed. He has to conceal from the people his face, which is still shining from the sight he has had of the glory of God, for they cannot bear the splendour of it. The preparation and setting up of the tabernacle is now proceeded with, the priests and Levites are consecrated to their sacred offices, and the giving of the law is at the same time carried on and completed.—Exod. xxxii.-xxxiv.

32. After a sojourn of nearly a year at Sinai, the command is given for the people to proceed on their way towards the land of promise. Soon they become impatient of the difficulties of the march, and some of them are consumed by fire from heaven. Again, they are weary of feeding on the manna, and lust after the flesh-pots of Egypt. Moses complains of the burden of his office, and the Lord lays upon theseventy elders of the same spirit that rested on Moses; then He gave quails in immense numbers, but while the flesh is still in their teeth, a sudden plague carries many of them off. Even Aaron and Miriam partake of the general discontent, and murmur against the exclusive honour and authority of Moses; but the Lord gives open testimony to the faithfulness of His servant, and the intimacy of His intercourse with him.—Num. i.-xii.

33. Soon the people reach the southern border of Canaan at Kadesh-barnea. Spies are sent to search the land. They bring back proofs of its fruitfulness, but give such

a report of the strength of its inhabitants that the people are thrown into faithless despair, from which the exhortations of Joshua and Caleb, who had been among the spies, fail to rouse them. The Lord offers again to transfer the blessing to Moses and his house, but Moses knows what is becoming his office. The judgment of God is then declared, that all except Joshua and Caleb, who were twenty years old and above at the time of the Exodus, and who therefore had themselves experienced the great deeds of God, shall die in the wilderness, where the people shall wander forty years.—Num. xiii., xiv.

It was probably in consequence of this sentence of rejection that the Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram, and the Kohathite, Korah, raised another rebellion, the former claiming the sovereignty as descendants of the first-born, the latter claiming the high priesthood. The Lord himself gives judgment in the case by the destruction of the rebels. The people, murmuring against this judgment, are themselves attacked by the plague, which Aaron's intercession alone checks; and by the significant symbol of the blossoming rod, he is marked out as the high priest chosen of God.—Num. xvi., xvii.

34. For thirty-eight whole years Israel wandered in the wilderness, rejected of the Lord; not living as His covenant people, but serving the idols which they had made (Ezek. xx.; Acts vii. 43; Amos v. 25, 26). Still the Lord did not altogether destroy them; He yet fed them with manna, and gave them the water from the rock to drink. Of this period the sacred history says nothing; but the broken thread is resumed when at length, in the first month of the fortieth year, the new generation of Israel returns to Kadesh. Here, under the provocation of the people's rebelliousness, the steadfastness

of Moses' believing obedience for once gives way. The people murmur for want of water, and the Lord commands Moses to take the rod and speak to the rock. But instead of this, Moses speaks harshly to the people, and strikes the rock twice. Both he and Aaron, who has stood by him on the occasion, are deprived for this of the honour of leading the people into the promised land. Aaron dies shortly after on Mount Hor. Owing to the difficulty of the country, the people cannot enter the promised land from the south, and the hostility of the Edomites prevents their entering on the east. They have again, therefore, to march southwards, and pass round the whole territory of Edom; for the Edomites refuse to allow them to pass through their land in peace, and Israel may not attack them in war because of their ancestral relationship. Weary of the way and of feeding on the manna, they murmur. Fiery serpents are sent among them; but the brazen serpent is set up, and whoever looks to it is healed.—Num. xx.-xxi. 9.

35. Having gone round the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, which also must remain untouched, the host of Israel comes to the border of the Amorites. Not knowing that the country east of the Jordan is destined for them, they send to ask of Sihon, king of the Amorites, a peaceful passage through his land. Sihon brings them an answer with the sword. He is defeated, and his land taken possession of. Og, king of Bashan, is likewise conquered; and Israel, having taken the whole land of the Amorites, encamps by the Jordan. While they lie there, Balak, king of Moab, in alliance with the Midianites, seeks to bring the curse of the Lord upon Israel, through means of Balaam, who is known as a prophet of Jehovah. The Lord forbids Balaam to go at

Balak's call, but the attraction of Balak's rewards is too strong for him. He can only speak, however, what the Lord gives him to speak. Instead of cursing, therefore, he can do nothing but bless Israel, and prophesies of their future greatness. But he gives the Moabites and Midianites the crafty advice to allure Israel to idolatry; which was of only too much avail, so that a plague sent from the Lord destroyed 23,000 men.—Num. xxi. 10; xxv.

36. After Moses had repeated the law, and the promises and threatenings of the Lord, he appointed Joshua his successor, divided the country east of Jordan among the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and gave his last blessing to the people. Then he went up to Mount Nebo, whence the Lord showed him the promised land. There he died, and the Lord buried him, so that no man has ever seen his grave.—Deut. i. ff.

THIRD EPOCH.—*Joshua and the Conquest of the Promised Land.*

(*A period of forty or fifty years.*)

37. In Egypt Israel had grown to be a nation; at Sinai it had received its law, its constitution, its sanctuary, and religious services. Only one condition of its independent national existence is now wanting,—a fit country for it to dwell in. It is now brought to rest in the land of its fathers; not by Moses, the representative of the law, but by Joshua (in Greek, Jesus), a hero of faith, endowed with the spirit that rested upon Moses,—a type of Him who bore the same name.

38. The burden which had threatened sometimes to crush even Moses, is transferred to the shoulders of Joshua, when he is eighty or ninety years old. He

knows the greatness of it, for he has stood beside Moses for forty years. He knows also his own weakness; but he sets himself to his work, strong and courageous in the Lord's promise of help, and in the obedience of the people. First of all, he sends spies to Jericho, the key of the country. Rahab, recognizing in faith the hand of the Lord, hides them from the search of the king, and saves herself, and her house. She afterwards marries into the tribe of Judah, and becomes an ancestress of David and of Christ. The spies report that the inhabitants are all without spirit to resist. The ark then opens up a dry path through the flooded stream of the Jordan, and Israel encamps in the territory of Jericho. As soon as they eat of the fruits of the land, the manna ceases. After a general circumcision (which had been omitted while they wandered in the wilderness, because the covenant of which it was the sign was suspended), the third passover is celebrated.—Joshua i.-v.

39. Under the direction of the captain of the Lord's host, who appears to Joshua before Jericho, and directs him to go round the walls of the city seven days with the army, and the priests with the trumpets, and tells him that at the last shout and blast of the trumpets the walls shall fall down, Jericho is won without striking a blow—a pledge to Israel of future success, and a reminder that their success comes not from their own strength. The city and everything in it is devoted to the Lord. But one of the people takes of that which is devoted. The curse of the Lord lying on them for this, brings them defeat before the despised men of Ai. The transgressor is discovered by lot, and stoned. Then Ai is taken; but, in contrast to their former contempt of this enemy, the whole army has to be drawn out. After

these first victories, Joshua sets up, as Moses had appointed, an altar on Mount Ebal, causes the law to be written there on great stones, and proclaims before the tribes of Israel, stationed on Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, the blessing and the curse.—Joshua vi.-viii.

40. Terrified by the successes of Israel, the Gibeonites, under false pretences, obtain an oath of alliance from Joshua, who neglects to ask counsel of the Lord. They are punished for their deceit by being made hewers of wood and drawers of water for the sanctuary, and for all the people. The king of Jerusalem and five kings of the south unite to take vengeance upon Gibeon. The Israelites come to the aid of the Gibeonites, and the Lord fights for them from heaven. Joshua, in the boldness of faith, demands that the brightness of day should continue till Israel has executed full vengeance on the enemy; and God hearkens to his voice. The victory leads to the conquest of the principal cities of the south. A similar league among the kings of the north meets with a similar fate. Their army is destroyed, and their cities taken possession of by Israel.—Joshua ix.-xii.

41. Thus in seven years the most of the land is conquered. It is now divided by lot among the tribes, to whose individual action is entrusted the destruction of the Canaanites that remain. The camp is removed from Gilgal to Shiloh, where also the tabernacle is set up. Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh return to the land assigned them by Moses, on the east of the Jordan, and build an altar on the river's bank as a memorial that they are still in religious and civil union with their brethren.

After a long time of peace and rest, Joshua, shortly before his death, gathered the people together to Shechem.

Reminding them of God's works on their behalf, he makes a covenant with them, gaining from them the promise that they will serve the Lord. Soon after this he died, 110 years old.—Josh. xiii-xxiii.

FOURTH EPOCH.—*The Time of the Judges.*

42. Israel possessed now everything necessary for a prosperous national life, under the immediate rule of the Lord Himself, between whom and the people the high priest occupied the place of Mediator. But the reality fell short of the ideal. Several of the Canaanitish tribes still remained in the land, and another generation of Israelites arose, who, instead of carrying out the divine decree of extermination, allied themselves with them, and joined in their idolatry. Yet God did not forsake His people. At the very first, the angel of the Lord appears at Bochim and rebukes the people. They weep, but do nothing more; and there begins a period of more than 300 years (1 Kings vi. 1), during which times of apostasy into idolatry, of consequent chastisement from various foes, of repentance, prayer, and deliverance by "judges," alternate with times of rest and peace, in which such episodes occurred as the book of Ruth records.

43. After Joshua's death Judah takes the lead, at the command of God, in carrying on the war against the Canaanites, and conquers the mountain country, which received his name. The other tribes did not drive out the inhabitants of the land, but contented themselves with making them tributary for the time. The first of the judges was Othniel, Caleb's nephew, who delivered Israel from the oppression of the king of Mesopotamia. Ehud slew the king of Moab, and destroyed the army of



the Moabites. Deborah and Barak broke the yoke of a yet more powerful oppressor, Jabin, king of Hazor. But again the children of Israel apostatised, and for seven years the Midianites so heavily oppressed them, laying waste their fields, and carrying off their cattle, that they had to hide themselves from them amongst the hills. When they cried to the Lord, He sent them a deliverer in Gideon. He assembles an army of more than 30,000 men. But the Lord will help, not by many, but by few, and allows him to lead only 300 against the enemy. With these he comes upon the camp of the Midianites by night, and roused by alarms on all sides of the camp, they are thrown into complete confusion and destroy one another. Gideon judges Israel for forty years, refusing, in true recognition of the Lord's kingship over Israel, the royal dignity which the people offer to make hereditary in his family.—Judg. i. 3; viii.

44. During a great famine, probably at the time of these Midianitish invasions, Elimelech, a Bethlehemite, with his wife and his two sons, went to live in the land of Moab. There the sons married Moabitish women. Elimelech died, and shortly after his two sons died also, leaving no children. Naomi, the wife of Elimelech, now returns to her native land, and Ruth, her daughter-in-law, longing for fellowship with the people of the Lord, refuses to be left behind. In Bethlehem Ruth attracts the notice of Boaz, one of her husband's nearest kinsmen, who undertakes the duties of a husband's brother. Thus Ruth, one of a heathen nation, becomes the great-grandmother of David, and an ancestress of Christ.—Ruth i.-iv.

45. In consequence of another fall into idolatry, the tribes to the east of the Jordan are given into the hand of the Ammonites. After they had been oppressed

eighteen years Jephthah was chosen by the Lord to deliver them. Before going forth against the enemy he makes a vow that if he return victorious, whatever comes first out at the door of his house to meet him shall be offered as a burnt offering to the Lord. He defeats the Ammonites, but loses, by his vow, his only daughter. The envy of Ephraim is roused by his success, because he had not invited them to help him. They attack the tribes beyond the Jordan, but are defeated, and being discovered at the fords of Jordan by their pronouncement of "Shibboleth," not one escapes.—Judg. x.-xii.

46. While these events took place beyond the Jordan, the country to the west of it fell for forty years under servitude to the Philistines. Eli was then high priest, a well-disposed, but weak man, not equal either to the religious, or to the political requirements of the period. But the Lord provided for both. At the beginning of the Philistine invasion, two children were born, both Nazarites from their birth, each of whom was to raise Israel in his own way from its deep degradation. Samson, the son of the Danite, Manoah, is announced by an angel before his birth as he who shall begin to deliver Israel. Samuel, the son of the Levite, Elkanah, given of the Lord in answer to his mother Hannah's prayer, is dedicated from the first to the service of the Sanctuary. He receives from the Lord the announcement of the destruction of Eli and his house for the iniquity of his two sons, which he has not checked; and the prophecy is not long of receiving its fulfilment. In an attempt to throw off the yoke of the Philistines, the Israelites take the ark with them to the war, thinking, that under its protection, they cannot fail of victory. But the ark falls into the hands of the Philistines. The two sons of Eli are killed,

and Eli himself, at the news of the taking of the ark, falls from his seat and breaks his neck. The ark is placed by the Philistines in the temple of their god, Dagon. But the god is twice thrown down before it, and the Philistines themselves are visited with plagues. They therefore send back the ark into the land of Judah. It is taken to Kirjath-jearim, and remains there until David carries it to Zion.—Judg. xiii. ; 1 Sam. i.-vi.

47. But the Philistine oppression did not yet come to an end, because the Lord's purposes had not yet been fully carried out by it. Now, however, He raises up Samson, who is to begin to deliver Israel out of their hand. Through his marriage with a Philistine woman, the Lord gives him opportunity of putting forth his great strength in the slaughter of the enemies of His people. Bound and delivered up by the men of Judah, he tears his fetters asunder, seizes the jaw-bone of an ass, and slays with it 1000 of the Philistines who have come to take him. Enticed, however, afterwards to declare wherein his strength lay, his unshorn hair (the sign and pledge of his vow as a Nazarite) is cut off, his strength is gone, and he falls into the Philistines' hands, who put out his eyes, and imprison him. In prison he recognizes and repents the sinfulness of his past life; and, with the growth of his hair, his strength is given him again. At an idolatrous feast, to which he is brought for exhibition to the people, he lays hold of the pillars on which the temple, where they are assembled, rests, and brings it down, dying himself under the ruins with the Philistine princes and people. His work was but a beginning of deliverance, because he frittered away his powers, and forgot, in sensuality, his high calling; and because his people left him to stand alone. It required a David to complete his

task, after the people had been re-invigorated by Samuel's reformation.—Judges xiv.-xvi.

FIFTH EPOCH.—*From Samuel's Reformation to the Division of the Kingdom.*

48. Samuel brings in a new period in the history of Israel, in which the theocracy reaches its most flourishing point. To raise it to this height, two new powers are introduced—the prophet and the king. Prophecy, which teaches each age to understand its position and its duty from the history of the past and the prospects of the future, becomes with Samuel an abiding leaven in the Israelitish national life. Through the schools of the prophets a regular prophetic order is formed, though several celebrated prophets were called to the office directly by God himself, without passing through these schools. In the monarchy the commonwealth attains a visible unity. David's conquests and Solomon's building of the temple carry the Old Testament economy to its highest point, and furnish new aspects of its Messianic expectations.

49. Soon after Samson's death, Samuel exhorted the people to repentance. At his instance, they destroy all traces of idolatry out of the land, and serve the Lord alone. Then he appoints a day of humiliation and prayer for all the people at Mizpah. When they were assembled there, they poured out water before the Lord, as a sign of the state of dissolution and helplessness in which they then were, confessed their sin, and fasted the whole day. Samuel assumes the office of judge as well as prophet, and has immediately to maintain his position against the Philistines, who come up in force as soon as they hear of this national rising. He sacrificed, and

the Lord terrified the enemy with a great thunder, so that they were defeated; and thus Israel was delivered out of their hand. Samuel judged Israel all the rest of his life.—1 Sam. vii.

50. When Samuel was old, the Israelites sought a king, as the heathen round them had; for his sons were not worthy to succeed him, and the land was threatened by Nahash, king of the Ammonites. By the appointment of God, Samuel anointed Saul as king, and God gave him another heart. He shortly shows his prowess by successes against Nahash and against the Philistines. Samuel then takes his farewell of the people, showing them the wrong they have done in asking a king, but comforting them by the promise that he will not cease to pray for them.

Saul soon forgets in his self-will his position as a servant of God. Already, in the war with the Philistines, he had ventured to offer sacrifice himself, and Samuel had told him that his kingdom would not endure. Now God bids him destroy Amalek, but he spares Agag the king and the best of the cattle. Samuel then announces to him God's irrevocable rejection of him, and carries out with his own hand the destruction of Agag. The Lord now chooses for His anointed David, the son of Jesse, a shepherd boy of Bethlehem, in whom the tribe of Judah obtains the supremacy assigned to it in ancient prophecy (Gen. xlix. 8-10), and more recent ordinances (Judg. i. 1, 2.) After his anointing the Spirit of God comes upon David, but an evil spirit from the Lord enters into Saul.—1 Sam. viii.-xvi.

51. War breaks out anew with the Philistines, and Goliath of Gath openly defies the God of Israel. No one ventures to answer his challenge till David hears of it, and

with lively confidence in God in his heart, and some sling-stones in his shepherd's pouch, goes out to meet the giant. His triumph arouses Saul's jealousy, so that he seeks to kill him, though he had become his son-in-law. David has to flee for his life, and takes refuge with Samuel in Ramah. Three times a messenger is sent to take him, and Saul at last comes himself to seek him. But the Spirit of the Lord lays hold of each man as he comes, so that they prophesy instead of carrying out their intended vengeance. Jonathan tries in vain to soothe his father's wrath against David, and himself urges his friend to flight. Fed by the high priest on the way with shew-bread, and girt with Goliath's sword, he betakes himself to Achish, king of Gath. Suspected by the servants of Achish, he takes refuge in the cave of Adullam, where 400 men gather round him. After several escapes from Saul's pursuit, and after generously abstaining from avenging himself on the king who twice falls into his hands, he betakes himself again to Achish, who is hindered only by the suspicion of his princes from taking David as an ally in the war he is carrying on against Saul. Saul, forsaken by the Lord, seeks advice from a witch in Endor, where the spirit of Samuel appeared to him and told him, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me." So it was, for Saul was in battle defeated and threw himself upon his sword.—1 Sam. xvii.-xxxi.

52. David is now called to the throne by the tribe of Judah at Hebron (1055-1015 B.C.); but Abner, Saul's chief captain, proclaims Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, king over the other tribes at Mahanaim. Abner, however, quarrelled with Ishbosheth and espoused the cause of David, and Ishbosheth himself is soon after assassinated. Abner also is murdered by Joab (David's nephew and

chief captain, 1 Chron. ii. 16), in revenge for his brother Asahel's death. At last, after seven years and a half, David is recognised by the other tribes, and solemnly anointed at Hebron. He takes from the Jebusites the citadel of Zion at Jerusalem, builds there the city of David, and resolves to bring thither the ark of the covenant. Terrified, however, by the death of Uzza, in consequence of his touching the sacred thing without authority, David desists for a time from his purpose. But as the Lord manifestly blesses the house of Obededom, where the ark is left, he causes it to be carried to Mount Zion by the Levites, with sacrifices and solemn dancing. As he already thought of building a temple on Mount Zion, he left the tabernacle still at Gibeon. But he at once sets about a complete organization of the tribe of Levi for the renewed and extended service of God. He divided the priests of the race of Aaron into twenty-four orders, each of which in succession had the oversight of the service of the sanctuary for a week. The other Levites were also arranged in different classes, each with its particular work. David did a special service to the worship of God by his appointment of three bands of singers from among the Levites, whose leaders were Heman, Asaph, and Ethan (or Jeduthun). The whole number of singers amounted to 4000, and they too were divided into twenty-four divisions, which probably served by turns.—2 Sam. i.-vi. ; 1 Chron. xii.-xvi., xxiii.-xxvi.

53. David, now dwelling at rest in his palace, resolved to build a house for the Lord. The prophet Nathan at first approves this resolution, but afterwards, instructed by God, tells him that not he but his seed shall build a house for the Lord, and that his seed shall reign for ever, and his throne and kingdom endure for ever; a prophecy

which, applying first of all to Solomon, finds its complete fulfilment only in Christ, and which adds the new element of kingship to the Messianic expectations.—2 Sam. vii. ; 1 Chron. xviii.

By David's victories over the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, Syrians, Edomites, &c., the kingdom of Israel attains its greatest extent, from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean Sea, and from Lebanon to the Arabian gulf (Gen. xv. 18.) While Joab is completing the conquest of the Ammonites, David remains idle at home, falls into adultery with Bathsheba, and becomes the murderer of her husband Uriah. By the parable of the poor man's lamb, Nathan leads him to pronounce sentence of death upon himself, and announces to him the judgment of God, that blood shall be required of his house for this sin. Nathan's words, "Thou art the man," do their work. David becomes deeply and sincerely penitent, and pours out his soul in the 51st Psalm—a model of penitence for all times and circumstances.—2 Sam. viii.-xii. ; 1 Chron. xx., xxi.

54. The threatened judgment soon breaks forth upon David's house ; he has received forgiveness, but the earthly consequences of the curse of sin must run their course. His son Amnon abuses his half-sister Tamar. Her brother Absalom assassinates Amnon, and flees to his grandfather, the king of Geshur. After three years Joab brings about his recal, but David does not allow him to come into his presence for two years more. By base arts of flattery, Absalom courts the favour of the people, and is proclaimed king at Hebron. David, humbling himself under the judgment of the Lord, flees from Jerusalem, gathers and marshals his army. The battle takes place in the wood of Ephraim, and Joab, in opposition to

the express command of David, kills Absalom as he hangs in his flight in a terebinth tree. David, forgetting Absalom's guilt in the greatness of his own sin which has brought this curse upon his house, laments for him: "Oh my son Absalom, would God I had died for thee!" The tribe of Judah then brings the king back to Jerusalem in state. Ziba, a Benjamite, takes advantage of the jealousy of the other tribes, roused by this act of Judah, to raise a new rebellion; but Joab soon quells this second revolt by getting its leader put to death.—2 Sam. xiii.-xx.

55. All his enemies without and within being thus overcome, and his kingdom having reached the full measure of its power and greatness, David, instead of reigning in peace and quietness, orders, contrary to the will of God, and with purposes of human ambition, an enumeration of the fighting men of Israel. The prophet Gad offers him the choice of three kinds of punishment, a seven years' famine, three months' flight before his enemies, or three days' pestilence. David prefers to fall into the hand of the Lord rather than into the hand of men, and so the pestilence kills 70,000 men—a punishment to the people for their rebellion against the anointed of the Lord, a punishment to David for his ambition. While the destruction was going on the Lord looked upon it and repented, and David lifted up his eyes and saw the angel of the Lord with his sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David repents in sackcloth and ashes, and confesses his sin. At the bidding of the prophet Gad he sacrifices on the threshing-floor of Araunah on Mount Moriah, where the angel had halted; and David fixes upon the place as the site of the future temple, for which he had already made considerable preparations. 2 Sam. xx.-xxiv.: 1 Chron. xxii.-xxx.

56. The great purposes of Old Testament history—to typify Christ, to foretell Him, and to bear witness of Him—are all exhibited in the life of David. He is the *ancestor* of Christ, and all the prophets henceforth describe Christ as his son. He is a *type* of Christ; through suffering and humiliation he passes on to glory, he becomes king of God's people and conqueror of the heathen. From this typical character of his life, his inspired psalms gain a mysterious prophetic significance, and look beyond the present to the life of his antitype, his son and Lord. Thus David is also a *prophet* of Christ.

57. Nathan, who brought up Solomon, discovers a conspiracy of Adonijah, one of David's sons, with Joab and Abiathar, to secure for himself the succession to the throne. David causes Solomon to be anointed by Zadok the priest, and proclaimed as king. After David's death Adonijah makes farther attempts upon the kingdom, but is taken and put to death. Solomon asks of the Lord, who appears to him in a dream at Gibeon, an understanding heart, and the Lord promises him besides, riches and honour.—He reigned from 1015 to 975, B.C.—1 Kings i.-iv.; 2 Chron. i.

58. In the fourth year of his reign, and the 480th year after the Exodus, Solomon begins the building of the temple, which lasts seven years. Hiram, king of Tyre, supplies him with cedars from Lebanon, and Tyrian workmen in return for corn. Quarter of a million of men are employed by turns in the work. The dimensions of the temple were twice as great as those of the tabernacle. At its consecration a cloud filled the Holy of Holies, and the glory of the Lord came down upon it. Solomon offered up a prayer, which is a glorious testimony to his wisdom and knowledge of God. The temple, as compared with

the tabernacle, is a proof that the kingdom of God in Israel has now attained a firm foundation for its further development.—1 Kings v.-viii. ; 2 Chron. ii.-vii.

75. Solomon, to whom the Lord had appeared a second time with exhortation and warning, promises and threatenings, fortified Jerusalem, and adorned it with splendid palaces. He also built several strong frontier cities, *e.g.*, Baalath, or Baalbec, in northern Palestine, and Tadmor, or Palmyra, in Syria. All the neighbouring peoples paid tribute to him. He surrounded himself and his court with all kinds of splendour. The queen of Sheba (the modern Yemen) in Arabia, visited him and admired his wisdom and glory. His poetical gifts, and his extensive knowledge, especially of nature, were as remarkable as his wisdom. Yet at last he was led astray by his many foreign wives, to whose gods he built altars. The prophet Ahijah divides his mantle, and gives ten parts to Jeroboam. Solomon died after a reign of forty years, having manifested the splendour and glory which became the theocratic kingdom, as David had exhibited its political power and importance. But he exceeded the proper measure, and thus prepared the way for the fall of the state.—1 Kings ix.-xi. ; 2 Chron. viii., ix.

76. The reigns of David and Solomon form the most flourishing period of Hebrew poetry. David himself excelled all his contemporaries in poetic endowments, and several richly gifted and inspired writers of psalms, stimulated by him, appeared along with him. His son Solomon inherited his gift, and excelled him in the number of his poetical productions. Of his 1005 songs only two psalms (72, 127), and the Song of Songs remain ; but of his 3000 proverbs there is a rich treasure in the collection which bears his name.

*SIXTH EPOCH.—From the division of the Kingdom to the
Cessation of Prophecy.*

77. By David's victories the kingdom of Israel had attained the greatest extension intended for it by God. But from this time forward it steadily advances towards its destruction. By the division of the kingdom, by ungodly alliances and wars with the nations around, but chiefly by ever growing apostacy from Jehovah, the state lost its inner strength, and drew down on itself the long delayed judgment of God. In the building of the temple the Old Testament worship had reached its highest development. Prophecy now reveals that this symbolical form of the kingdom of God is to pass into another in which all symbol is realized, thus preparing the way for the breaking up of the form of the Old Testament worship, and the fulfilment of its meaning. If the prophets hitherto have been successors of Moses, zealous for law and ceremony, they begin now to be forerunners of Christ, developing ever more clearly and definitely the picture of the promised Son of David.

78. After Solomon's death (975 B.C.), the ten tribes which, under the leadership of Ephraim had, from the time of the judges, formed an opposition to the sovereignty of Judah, assembled at Shechem and demanded of Rehoboam a reduction of taxes. Rehoboam follows the unwise counsel of the young men, and answers the demands of the tribes with a cutting jest. They stone his tax-gatherer, Adoram, and choose Jeroboam as their king. Rehoboam flees to Jerusalem and gathers an army; but the prophet Shemaiah forbids a civil war. Judah and a part of Benjamin remain true to Rehoboam,

and a number of godly Israelites who would not give up the temple-worship, as well as all the priests and Levites, settled in the kingdom of Judah. Rehoboam in his reign of seventeen years did not do what pleased the Lord. Therefore the Lord humbled him by means of Shishak, king of Egypt, who plundered the temple and palace in Jerusalem.—1 Kings xii. 1-24 ; 2 Chron. x.-xii.

Jeroboam chose Shechem for his capital. In ungodly statecraft he set up two golden calves at Dan and at Bethel, appointed the festivals a month later than in Jerusalem, chose priests who were not of the tribe of Levi, officiated himself as high priest, and encouraged worship in the high places. Prophets announced to him the profanation of the altar at Bethel by Josiah, and the overthrow of his house.—1 Kings xii. 24 ; xiv.

79. Rehoboam was succeeded by his son Abijah, who, from policy at least, appeared to be godly. In his war with Jeroboam he made a masterly address to the hostile army, and obtained a splendid victory. After three years his son Asa succeeded him, whose heart was right with the Lord. He abolished the worship of strange gods, fortified several cities, and organised a strong army. In the strength of prayer he overcame Zerah, king of Ethiopia ; but when Baasha, king of Israel, and Benhadad I., of Syria, came against him he made flesh his arm. Therefore the Lord punished him with disease in his feet, and in his sickness he sought not the Lord but physicians.—1 Kings xv. 1-24 ; 2 Chron. xiii.-xvi.

Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab, who, after scarcely two years, was killed by Baasha. He made Tirzah his capital, and reigned twenty-four years. His son Elah was killed in the second year of his reign by Zimri. He, however, possessed the throne only seven days, for when

he heard that Omri had been made king by the army, he burned his palace over his own head at Tirzah. Omri built Samaria, which from this time was the capital. He reigned twelve years. His son Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal of Zidon ; and by their influence the worship of Baal and Ashtarothe became the state-religion of Israel.—1 Kings xv. 25 ; xvi.

80. Elijah the Tishbite appears with a word of power, and announces to Ahab a long drought. The ravens feed him by the brook Cherith, and when the brook is dried up he goes to Zarephath in Phœnicia, to a widow whose meal and oil he miraculously increases, and whose son he raises from the dead. After three years of drought the Lord purposes to give rain, and Elijah goes to announce it to Ahab. The whole people is assembled on Mount Carmel, where the prophet proves before king and people, in opposition to the 450 priests of Baal, that Jehovah is God. At Elijah's command the people slay all the priests of Baal at the brook Kishon, and then Elijah proclaims under a cloudless sky the approaching rain. He has spoken the word, but six times his servant on the top of Carmel looks in vain for a cloud. At last, the seventh time, he brings the news that a little cloud, the size of a man's hand, is rising over the sea ; and soon the whole sky is black with clouds. Ahab hastens home, and Elijah runs before his chariot.—1 Kings xvii., xviii.

The prophet flees before the revenge of Jezebel, into the wilderness of Judah. An angel feeds and refreshes him, and in the strength of this food he goes forty days and nights to Horeb. Here his burdened heart brings before the Lord its complaint of the apostacy of the people. The Lord, approaching neither in the whirlwind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still, soft whisper-

ing, tells him for answer that there are still 7000 men in Israel whose knees have not bent before Baal, and whose mouths have not kissed him; and commands him to anoint Hazael king of Syria to do vengeance on ungodly Israel, to anoint Jehu king of Israel to do vengeance on Ahab's house, and to anoint Elisha his successor for the carrying forward of his own work.—1 Kings xix.

81. Benhadad II., king of Syria, makes war against Ahab and is taken captive. But as Ahab weakly calls him brother instead of destroying him, a prophet announces to him the sentence, "Thy life shall go for his life."—1 Kings xx.

Naboth the Jezreelite refused, in obedience to Num. xxxvi. 7, to give Ahab his vineyard. Ahab is displeased, but Jezebel can console him. At her instigation; Naboth is stoned upon false testimony. The word of the Lord, by Elijah, pronounces judgment on Ahab, his house, and on Jezebel. Ahab repents, not indeed from the heart; but because he has at least bowed before the Lord, the destruction of his house is not to take place until the reign of his son. Thereafter he allies himself with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, for the conquest of Ramoth in Gilead. Ahab, though disguised, is struck by an arrow and falls.—1 Kings xxi.-xxii.

82. Jehoshaphat, the godly son of godly Asa, is richly blessed by the Lord, for he took away the high places and groves, and sent priests and Levites through the whole land with the book of the law. He sought also to heal the breach of Joseph (Amos vi. 6), that is to say, the mischief of the separation and hostility of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, by a closer alliance between them, but forgot that only that alliance can last and prosper to which the Lord is a party. The curse of God lay on

Ahab's house, and therefore alliance with it brought only misfortune to the godly king. Especially ruinous to his house was the marriage of his son Joram with Athaliah, Jezebel's daughter.—1 Kings xxii. 41 ff. ; 2 Chron. xvii.-xx.

Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who, in a time of sickness inquired, not of Jehovah, but of Baalzebub the god of Ekron. Elijah meets the messengers and rebukes them, giving them a message from Jehovah to their master. They know him not, but Ahaziah recognises at once that it has been he who has spoken to them, and gives orders to seize him. Twice does fire from heaven destroy a captain and his men who are sent to take him. Elijah accompanies the third who has come humbly before him, and pronounces in the king's presence the sentence of his death. Ahaziah was succeeded by his brother Joram.—2 Kings i.

Elijah goes with Elisha, who, having a presentiment of what is to happen, will not leave him, to Jericho. His mantle opens a way for them through the Jordan. Elisha begs from his departing master a double portion of his spirit. Then there came a fiery chariot and horses, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind to heaven.—2 Kings ii.

83. Elisha obtained what he had sought, and proved himself in many ways a second Elijah, by the wonders which he wrought. He announces to Joram, who, though he adhered to the sins of Jeroboam, yet did not quite shut himself out from the influence of the prophet, the secret purposes of Benhadad II. Benhadad sends an army to Dothan to take him ; but in answer to his prayer his enemies are struck with blindness, and Elisha leads them to Samaria, entertains them, and lets them go. Benhadad then besieged Samaria, and the famine in the city became so great that a mother killed her child for food.

The king is so deeply moved by this that he swears he will kill Elisha, to whom he thinks this siege is owing. He sends a messenger to fetch him, but repenting of his haste he follows him at once. Elisha announces to him unheard of plenty on the following day. During the night the Syrians are terrified by a great noise of horses, chariots and armed men, and thinking an Egyptian army is upon them they flee, leaving all their property behind. The immense spoil taken in the Syrian camp furnishes abundance of provision. Elisha then goes to Damascus to anoint Hazael king of Syria, and weeps over the misery which he will inflict upon Israel.—2 Kings ii.-viii. 15.

84. Joram, the son of Jehoshaphat, introduced, in concert with his godless wife Athaliah, the worship of Baal into Judah. The Philistines and Arabians plunder Jerusalem; and the Lord brings upon Joram an incurable disease of which he dies. Ahaziah (or Jehoahaz) succeeded. He visits Joram, king of Israel, when he returns wounded to Jezreel from a battle with Hazael.—2 Kings viii. 16 ff.; 2 Chron. xxi., xxii.

Meanwhile, Elisha bids one of the scholars of the prophets anoint Jehu, the general of Joram. The army proclaims him king, and he advances towards Jezreel. When Joram, with his nephew Ahaziah, king of Judah, come out to meet him, Jehu's arrow pierces his heart on Naboth's field. Ahaziah fled, but was overtaken and killed. Jezebel is thrown out of the window of the palace and eaten by dogs. Jehu destroys all the kindred of Ahab, as well as all the priests of Baal. But he himself did not forsake the sins of Jeroboam. Therefore his house is not to endure beyond the fourth member of it. At this time also the Lord began to be weary of Israel's sin, and Hazael smote them in all their borders.—2 Kings ix., x.

On the news of Ahaziah's death, Athaliah put to death all the king's seed to secure the government for herself. Only Joash, the son of Ahaziah, a child of one year old, was saved and concealed in the temple. After six years the high priest Jehoiada succeeds in setting him on the throne. Athaliah is slain, and the worship of Baal rooted out of Judah. The priests give freely of their revenues for the restoration of the temple. But after Jehoiada's death Joash again sets up the worship of Baal. The prophet Zachariah, the son of Jehoiada, is stoned for rebuking the people for this. But what he prophesied came to pass, the Syrians attacked and plundered Jerusalem. Joash himself was put to death by his own servants.—2 Kings xi., xii. ; 2 Chron. xxii.-xxiv.

85. Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, followed also the sins of Jeroboam, and the Lord gave him into the hand of Hazael. In the reign of his son Joash, Elisha died after prophesying three victories over the Syrians. Jeroboam II., the son of Joash, recovered from Benhadad III. the whole of the country on the east of Jordan. For the Lord looked upon the misery of Israel, and sent the prophets Hosea, Amos, Jonah, &c., to teach the king the ways of the Lord. But this new prosperity was of short duration, for they were not led to repentance by the goodness of God.—2 Kings xiii., xiv. 23 ff.

Amaziah, the son and successor of Joash king of Judah, made war against the Edomites, conquered them, and took their chief city, Petra. But he brought back their gods and burned incense to them. He had hired for this war 100,000 Israelites, whom however a prophet warns him to leave behind. In his absence they plunder and murder in Judah. This was probably the reason why he challenged Joash, king of Israel, to battle. He will not

be warned to forbear, and is defeated and taken. Joash plunders Jerusalem, and then sets Amaziah free.— 2 Kings xiv. 1-22; 2 Chron. xxv.

86. Uzziah (or Azariah), the son of Amaziah, sought the Lord as long as the prophet Zachariah lived, and therefore the Lord prospered him. But at last he became arrogant, and sought to unite the priestly with the kingly dignity; as he was offering incense he became leprous, and remained so the rest of his life. From that time his son Jotham was regent of the kingdom. He reigned after his father's death sixteen years, doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He restored the temple, put the Amorites to tribute, and became very mighty. 2 Kings xv. 1-7; 2 Chr. xxvi.

After the death of Jeroboam II., Israel was so much disturbed that his son Zachariah could not ascend the throne till after eleven years of anarchy, and then was killed after six months. With him Jehu's race came to an end. Shallum, his murderer, kept the throne only a month, when he was put to death by Menahem, his general. He maintained himself by his cruelty, and by the purchased protection of Pul, king of Assyria, for ten years, till he died. His son, Pekahiah, is killed by Pekah after a reign of two years, (and he again, after twenty years, by Hoshea, the last king of Israel). Pekah allies himself with Rezin of Damascus, against Ahaz king of Judah. The latter, however, calls to his aid Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, who carries into captivity both the Syrians and the inhabitants of the northern part of Galilee, and the country east of the Jordan.—2 Kings xv. 8 ff.

87. From the period of the reign of Jeroboam II., Old Testament prophecy begins to assume a new form. Since it was revived in Samuel it had occupied itself almost exclusively with the events of the present. During the

prosperous times of David and Solomon it saw, in the circumstances of the time, the germs and types of future perfection, and its task was to cherish and preserve these. After the division of the kingdom, while there was still hope, that, by resisting the corruption which had begun, restoration was still possible, prophecy, as represented by Elijah and Elisha, made it its aim to bring back the lost state of things. But now, when that hope is more and more completely disappearing, prophecy turns its glance towards the future. Unavoidable judgment hangs over Israel and Judah. But since the covenant of God is sure, this judgment is to them only a chastisement which leads on to deliverance and higher glory than ever, in the person of the Second David, the promised Messiah. This change in the character of prophecy necessitates that its words be committed to writing for the instruction of future generations. Hence from the appearance of Hosea in the reign of Jeroboam II. onwards through the captivity, to those who prophesied after the return, we have the series of prophets, whose predictions are contained in the prophetic books of Scripture.

88. The godly Jotham was succeeded by his godless son, Ahaz, who served Baal, and caused his children to pass through the fire, i.e., sacrificed them to his gods. Pekah of Israel, and Rezin of Syria besiege Jerusalem. Ahaz purchases the help of Tiglath-pileser of Assyria, in spite of the efforts of Isaiah the prophet to restrain him. Isaiah calls upon him to seek a sign. The unbelieving king refuses, and the prophet points him to a more distant sign, the birth of the Messiah from a virgin, and in security for that to a sign at hand, viz., before the child learns to choose between good and evil, the lands of the two hostile kings shall be forsaken. Tiglath pileser helped

indeed, destroying Syria, carrying captive a part of Israel, and laying the rest under tribute, but he turned, as Isaiah had prophesied, against Jerusalem, which, however, he did not succeed in conquering. The temple of Jehovah was formally consecrated by Ahaz as an idol-temple.—2 Kings xvi; 2 Chr. xxvii., xxviii.; Is vii.-xii.

Hoshea, the murderer of Pekah, did not ascend the throne of Israel till after a nine years' anarchy. Trusting to an alliance with So, king of Egypt, he withholds the Assyrian tribute, and Salmanassar takes Samaria, after a siege of three days. He removes the Israelites to Media and Assyria, and peoples the land with heathen. They ally themselves with the Israelites who were left, and form the 'Samaritans.' God sent lions among them to make them take note of the manner of the God of the land, and Salmanassar sends them, at their request, an Israelitish priest to teach them. Thus they learned to fear Jehovah, though they did not give up their hereditary idolatry.—2 Kings xvii.

89. Ahaz' godly son, Hezekiah, began his 29 years' reign with earnest extirpation of idolatry. After temple, priests, and people were sanctified, he held a solemn after-passover at Jerusalem, to which he invited all the Israelites. He refused the Assyrians the tribute which Ahaz had paid, and Sennacherib came up with a great army. Hezekiah cries to the Lord, and Isaiah promises deliverance. The angel of the Lord smites in one night, 185,000 men in the camp of Sennacherib. Soon after Hezekiah is seized with a fatal sickness, but on his prayer the Lord adds fifteen years to his life. Hezekiah, in vanity exhibits his treasures to the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, who came to congratulate him on his twofold deliverance; and Isaiah announces to him that

all this shall be carried to Babylon with his posterity.—2 Kings xviii.-xx. ; 2 Chr. xxix.-xxxii. ; Is. xxxvi.-xxxix.

Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, reigned 56 years, and introduced all possible abominations of idolatry. Esarhaddon, the successor of Sennacherib, who had also conquered Babylon, takes him captive thither. There he repents ; God brings him back to his kingdom, and now he abolishes idolatry. His son Amon, however, was again idolatrous, and was murdered after two years.—2 Kings xxi. ; 2 Chr. xxxiii.

90. Amon's son, Josiah, ascended the throne in his eighth year, began to seek the Lord in his sixteenth, and in his twentieth commenced a thorough reformation of the worship of God. While the temple was being repaired, Hilkiah the high priest found the almost forgotten book of the law of Moses, which was made the foundation of the reformation. When the roll is opened the eye of Shaphan the scribe falls upon the curses pronounced against the apostate people ; and Huldah the prophetess can only confirm the certainty of their fulfilment. Josiah holds an assembly of the people, when the whole book is read, and orders a solemn and regular passover, such as had not been held since Samuel's time. Josiah sets himself unnecessarily in opposition to Pharaoh-nechoh in his expedition against the Chaldees, and falls in battle. His death filled the people with terror, because they felt that judgment was only withheld during the life of the godly king ; but God hastened His servant away that he might be spared.—2 Kings xxii., xxiii. ; 2 Chron. xxxiv., xxxv.

The people chose Jehoahaz, the youngest son of Josiah, to be king. But after three months Necho set his elder brother Eliakim, whom he now named Jehoiakim, in his place, and carried Jehoahaz captive to Egypt. Jehoiakim

reigned eleven years. After Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, had defeated Necho (606 B.C.), he appeared before Jerusalem. Jehoiakim surrendered to him, and Nebuchadnezzar took part of the vessels of the temple and several noble young men, among whom was Daniel, with him to Babylon. (With this first carrying away began the seventy years of captivity which Jeremiah, (xxv. 11, 12; xxix. 10,) had prophesied.) Soon thereafter Jehoiakim rebelled, the Chaldeans again besieged Jerusalem. Jehoiakim died, and his son Jehoiachin succeeded, but reigned only three months. He surrendered himself of his own accord, and was carried away with his family and all the noble of the land, as well as all the men capable of bearing arms, and the carpenters and smiths. Amongst these captives was the prophet Ezekiel. Nebuchadnezzar placed the youngest son of Josiah, Mattaniah, whom he named Zedekiah, on the throne. In foolish confidence in an alliance with Pharaoh-hophra, though warned by Jeremiah, he rebelled in the ninth year of his reign. Nebuchadnezzar now besieges Jerusalem the third time for two whole years. A fearful famine comes on. Zedekiah is taken in flight, and, with his eyes put out, is led in chains to Babylon. Jerusalem is completely destroyed, and all the sacred vessels of the temple brought to Babylon (588 B.C.).—2 Kings xxiv.-xxv. 21; 2 Chron. xxxvi.; Jer. xxxix., lii.

Nebuchadnezzar left only a few of the common people in the land, and appointed Gedaliah their governor. He resided with a small Chaldee garrison at Mizpah. He maintained friendly relations with Jeremiah, and ruled with great gentleness. Many fugitives returned, and civil life began again to be established, when the true-hearted Gedaliah was assassinated by Ishmael, a fanatic

Jew of the royal race All the remaining Jews fled to Egypt to escape the vengeance of the Chaldeans.—2 Kings xxv. 22 ff. ; Jer. xl.-xliv.

91. The exiled Jews in Babylon, misled by false prophets, were at first filled with vain hopes of a speedy return to Jerusalem, and chafed under the yoke of the Chaldeans. The prophet Ezekiel laboured by word and deed, by symbol and discourse, to show the falsity of such hopes, and to point them forward to the true deliverance. But after Jerusalem was finally destroyed, the most of the people began to feel themselves at home in the strange land, so that many even forgot their longing for their home. The better part, however, retained this longing, and of their feelings the 137th Psalm is a powerful expression. On the whole the chastisement of exile bore rich fruit. The inclination to idolatry completely disappeared, and a true, unswerving, though often only external and self-righteous, clinging to the law of their fathers took its place.

92. Daniel, enabled by God to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, becomes chief of the Magi and overseer of the province of Babylon. Under Nebuchadnezzar's son, Belshazzar (Evil-merodach), Daniel is set aside and forgotten, but as a reward for his reading the mysterious writing on the wall which proclaimed the downfall of his kingdom, Belshazzar makes him the third ruler in the kingdom, hoping, doubtless, to turn aside thereby the impending destruction. But in the same night Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Mede took the kingdom. Darius makes Daniel ruler of the third part of his kingdom. Meanwhile the seventy years of Jeremiah are drawing to a close. This impels Daniel to prayer, and the angel Gabriel appears to him and announces not only

that the decree of restoration had gone forth when he began to pray, but also that within seventy weeks of years, reckoned from the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the Messiah should come.—Daniel i.-xii.

93. Cyrus in the first year of his reign over Babylon (536 B.C.), decreed, as Isaiah had prophesied, the return of the Jews. But only a comparatively small part of the people made use of this permission; the rest preferred their comfort in the foreign land to the difficulties which awaited them at home. Under the leadership of the prince Zerubbabel, the grandson of Jehoiachin, and the high priest Joshua, 50,000 Jews went up to Jerusalem, and began vigorously the building of the temple. The Samaritans wished to take part with them, but they, remembering the experience of their fathers, refused to allow them. The Samaritans avenged themselves by calumniating the Jews at court. In the reign of Cambyses the building of the temple was interrupted, but Darius Hystaspes gave them again royal permission and support. With renewed energy through the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the temple was completed and consecrated (516 B.C.) In this second temple the ark was wanting, and the Holiest of all was quite empty. Under Artaxerxes (Longimanus) a second colony, led by Ezra, a scribe of the race of the high priest, went up to Jerusalem (458 B.C.) He exhorted the people to repentance, and instructed them with great zeal in the law.—Ezra i.-x.

Thirteen years later, Nehemiah, cup-bearer to the same Artaxerxes, receives news of the sad condition of the people. Armed with full powers from the king, he journeys to Jerusalem. The building of the walls of the city is now begun in earnest, but the Samaritans hinder it much. Nehemiah



sets half the people to build, and half to give armed protection, and seeks with Ezra's help to strengthen them in their God. After the finishing of the walls nine-tenths of the people go to dwell in the other cities. After twelve years' work Nehemiah returned to Persia, but we find him again in Jerusalem in the reign of Darius Nothus, diligently reforming the abuses that had sprung up in his absence. Manasseh the son of the high priest is expelled, because he will not give up his heathen wife. He became the reformer and first high priest of the hitherto half-heathen Samaritan worship.—Neh. i.-xiii.

94. The book of Esther gives us a fragment of Jewish history in the Persian period. Esther, a poor Jewish orphan, becomes the queen of Ahasuerus (Xerxes). Haman, the king's favourite, obtains a decree that all the Jews in the empire should be slain on a certain day. Esther reveals to the king the wicked devices of Haman, and the Jews obtain permission to avenge themselves on their enemies. In remembrance of their deliverance the feast of Purim is instituted.—ESTH. 1.-x.

SEVENTH EPOCH.—*From the close of O. T. prophecy to its N. T. fulfilment.*—400 years.

95. The chastisement of exile had destroyed from among the chosen people, every trace of their old longing for heathen customs and idolatries. The law and the prophets were now complete, and served them as a bulwark against the attacks of heathenism. And as they stood firm in this struggle, the people received again political independence. This period is the proper missionary period of Israel's history, though they recognised not their calling. Their captivity amongst the heathen,

their establishment of Synagogues in every city where the law and the prophets were read, made the heathen acquainted with their faith and hopes, and thus furthered the divine plan of salvation. But though heathen tendencies were destroyed, other dispositions were developed which led to their rejection of the salvation when it came; on the one hand, exclusiveness, national pride, self-righteousness, earthly ideas of the Messiah; and on the other hand, Sadducean unbelief, which could only mock at the promises and hopes of the fathers. But all true Israelites still cherished these hopes, and found salvation in the Saviour when he appeared.

96. Alexander the Great, who prepared the way for the speedy spread of the gospel among the nations, by carrying Greek commerce and the Greek language over the world, demanded of the Jews assistance in men and provisions during his siege of Tyre. Jaddua, the high priest, refused, and Alexander marched upon Jerusalem. The high priest, with his sacred dress, followed by the priests and Levites, all dressed in white, went forth in solemn procession to meet him. Alexander's anger disappeared, he entered Jerusalem peaceably, sacrificed in the temple, and guaranteed privileges to the Jews.

After Alexander's death, Jerusalem fell into the hands of Ptolemy, who treated the Jews with great humanity. He removed 100,000 of them to Egypt, specially to Alexandria, and gave them equal rights with the Macedonians. For 100 years Palestine was under the rule of the Ptolemies, during most of which time the Jews¹ lived a happy and peaceful life. They were sought after by all rulers for new colonies, and thus were scattered among the nations. Greek became the language of those who were thus dispersed, and a Greek translation of the *Old*

Testament became necessary, which was provided in the Septuagint by Ptolemy Philadelphus.

In the year 203 B.C., Palestine fell into the hands of the kings of Syria, who at first gave the Jews great privileges and secured them in the exercise of their religion. But Antiochus Epiphanes employed every kind of cruelty to force the Jews to adopt the Greek customs and religion. Jerusalem was taken and plundered, the temple desecrated, and dedicated to Jupiter Olympus, the Scriptures torn and burnt. This was the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel (xi. 31.), a type of still future destruction (Matt. xxiv. 15).

97. In this general distress the courage of the priest Mattathias and his five sons was the means of deliverance. A band of like-minded men assembled themselves around him, who avoided open battles, but did much injury to the Syrians by guerilla warfare. After the father's death (166 B.C.), the oldest of the sons, Judas Maccabeus, succeeded, by a swift course of victories, in crushing the Syrians and restoring the worship of God in the temple (165 B.C.). In remembrance of this, the feast of the dedication was instituted. In new difficulties he sought an alliance with the Romans, who gave him nothing but promises. And after that the blessing of God seemed to depart from him. He was totally defeated by the Syrians, and perished (161 B.C.). His brother Simon succeeded at last (141 B.C.) in taking possession of the citadel of Zion, which had hitherto been held by the Syrians, and in getting the independence of his people recognised. The grateful people gave him and his descendants the hereditary dignity of prince and high priest, "till God should send them a right prophet." His son and successor, John Hyrcanus, conquered Samaria and Galilee, and destroyed

the temple on Mount Gerizim. He then subdued the Edomites (Idumeans), and compelled them to incorporate themselves by circumcision with the Jewish people. His son Aristobulus took the rank of king in 106 B.C.

98. Since prophecy had ceased, the Sacred Scriptures were treasured with the greater care, and there soon arose a special class of men, the *Scribes*, who occupied themselves with the study of the Scriptures, and the instruction of the people in them. At a later period they assumed the title of Rabbi. In their anxiety to watch over the understanding of the Scriptures, they soon formed a traditional way of interpretation, which should exclude every innovating tendency. In the observance of the law, too, there was increasing precision, and as the Mosaic law was not felt sufficient by itself to ward off the influence of heathen customs, they added to it traditions of the fathers which they observed with the same care as the law itself. The need of public instruction called forth the institution of the Synagogues, where, on Sabbaths and festivals, there was prayer and reading of the Scriptures, which were explained by the Scribes.

The proper representatives of this attachment to tradition were the *Pharisees* (separated, pious), who formed a strong opposition to the increasing worldliness of the Maccabean princes, as they had obtained unconditional authority over the mass of the people. They zealously opposed every neglect of the law and the traditions, but lost themselves more and more in hypocrisy and self-righteousness. In contrast to them were the *Sadducees*, who derived their name and origin from a Scribe called Zadok. The leading and wealthy men belonged to this sect. They rejected all traditions, and even the Scripture

doctrines of the existence of angels and spirits, of immortality, resurrection, and eternal award.

99. In the confusion of the last years of the Maccabee dynasty, the assistance of Pompey was called in. He conquered Jerusalem, and named Hyrcanus, the grandson of Aristobulus, prince and high priest. But this weak man left the government of the land to the deceitful Idumean Antipater. Cæsar appointed the latter Procurator of Judea, and left Hyrcanus only the high-priesthood. Herod, the son of Antipater, was formally declared by the Roman Senate king of Judea (40 B.C.). His marriage with Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, gave his government the appearance of legitimacy in the eyes of the people. He secured himself on his throne by inhuman cruelty. His wife's kindred, and at last his wife herself, were put to death. Even his own sons by Mariamne did not escape. He attempted to appease the people for this cruelty, as well as to satisfy his own love of splendour, by renewing the temple at lavish expense. His kingdom was divided after his death among his three sons, Archelaus, Herod Antipas, and Philip. Philip died childless, A.D. 33; the others were banished by the Romans, who assumed the government of the whole country. But a member of the house of Herod was still left, Herod Agrippa I., the grandson of Herod and Mariamne. As soon as he came of age, the Emperor Caligula gave him the territories of Philip and Herod Antipas, with the title of king, and Claudius added to this what had belonged to Archelaus, so that he became master of all Palestine (41 A.D.). At his death his son Agrippa II., was only seventeen years old. Palestine was therefore added to the Roman province of Syria, and not until 53 A.D. did Claudius give Agrippa a part of his

inheritance in the north-east, with the title of king. At the destruction of Jerusalem his dominion was unaffected, and he continued to reign till his death in the third year of Trajan.

100. From the time of Herod Agrippa's death, 44 A.D., the country was governed by Roman procurators. Felix, Festus, Albinus, and Gessius Florus were the successive holders of this office. The latter was even more avaricious and despotic than his predecessors, and endeavoured to rouse the Jews to insurrection, that no complaint of theirs against him might be listened to at Rome. He at last succeeded in this endeavour in the year 66. Cestius Gallus, the governor of Syria, was defeated in his attempt to quell the rebellion, and Vespasian, and latterly his son Titus, carried on the work. The latter besieged Jerusalem at the time of the passover, when the city was crowded. Famine and pestilence raged fearfully, but the zealots put to death all who spoke of surrender. At length Titus took the outer walls by storm, and the Jews took refuge, some in the temple, and others in the citadel. Titus wished to spare the temple, but, in spite of orders to the contrary, a soldier set it on fire, and it was burnt on the same day on which, 600 years before, the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. There remained, as the Lord had said, not one stone upon another (70 A.D.) After the citadel was captured, the whole city was levelled to the ground.

101. This political destruction of Israel was the necessary consequence of its rejection of the promised salvation and the regenerating spirit of Christianity. The soul of Israelitish history was the divine decree of redemption. As soon as this quickening breath was taken from it, it became a dead corpse, which could only become a prey to corrup-

tion. Since then Israel has been wandering through the centuries, a testimony to the fidelity of prophecy and the truth of Christianity. As this people stood alone in ancient history, so it stands alone still. Eighteen centuries have effected no changes upon them. This fact, taken along with prophecy, shows us that here is the finger of God, that something special is still in store for this people. Israel as a nation rejected salvation, but Israel as a nation shall be converted yet, and shall bow before the Son of God and Son of David, confessing that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Division II.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT AND COMPLETION OF SALVATION.

SECTION I.—*Salvation in the Person of the Redeemer.*

102. By 4000 years' experience, it had been clearly proved that by man's own power and wisdom salvation could not be attained, either in the way of law, as was proved by Judaism, or in the way of worldly culture, art, and science, as Heathenism showed. In the utter corruption of human nature, the law had brought only the knowledge of sin, and was to all true Israelites a schoolmaster to bring to Christ. The conscience of the heathen, though corrupted in many ways by deceitful lusts, yet sufficed to convince them of their moral impurity. At the same time, the worship and the prophecies of Israel had revealed to men God's purpose of redemption, while heathenism was ready to devote to the service of the new salvation the human culture and wisdom which it had developed. For as Israel comforted itself with the promises of the fathers, so also there were among the heathen anticipations of a coming salvation,—nay, of a great king who should arise in Judea, and bring in the golden age. Moreover, the whole world was now united under one sceptre; one language everywhere prevailed, and the

lively intercourse of commerce furthered the quick spread of the new truths. Thus on all sides was the way prepared for the great Physician, who alone could relieve the deep-felt need.

103. To accomplish this redemption appeared, in the fulness of time, Christ, the Son of God and Son of man, in whom the true divinity of the Word, by whom the world was made, and the true humanity of Jesus the Son of David were united in a personal unity. The Son of God veiled His divine glory under the dark veil of human nature. He did not lay aside His divinity itself; He only laid aside the form of it. In the man Jesus dwelt the whole fulness of the Godhead bodily, but only the eye of faith could see His glory.

104. John the Baptist was announced before his birth by an angel of the Lord, and destined to be a Nazarite. When he was grown up, he appeared as a prophet in the spirit and power of Elias, preaching repentance. Those who confessed their sins, he baptized with water, as a symbolic seal of their repentance, and announced one coming after him, who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. John preached repentance not only to the people, but to the Tetrarch, Herod Antipas. He had married Herodias his brother's wife. John appeared before him, and said, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Herod therefore cast him into prison, but did not venture to take his life,—nay, he heard him gladly, and obeyed him in many things. Here, in the dark dungeon, John's faith, else so bright and clear, gave way to doubt in the hour of temptation, and he sent two of his disciples to Jesus, to ask him, "Art thou he that should come?" Jesus referred him to His miracles. John fell at last by the executioner's sword. For the daughter of Herodias,

dancing before Herod, pleased him so much, that he swore he would give her whatever she wished. The princess, urged by her mother, asked the head of John the Baptist, and Herod reluctantly, but forced by his oath, caused him to be beheaded in prison.

105. The genealogical registers of Christ (Matt. i. 1-17; Luke iii. 23-38) are intended to show the connection between him and the Ancestor of Israel, out of which salvation was to come, as well as between him and the ancestor of the human race, for which He was to be a Saviour. Matthew contents himself with carrying the genealogy no further back than Abraham; for, writing for the Jews, his chief object is to show the connection of the Redeemer with the Old Testament line of promise, to manifest Him to be the genuine heir of the kingdom of David. Luke, who wrote for Gentiles, must go back to Adam, to show all nations that Christ is of their flesh and blood.

106. Mary, a virgin of David's royal race, poor and insignificant in the eyes of the world, but precious and chosen before the Lord, rich in child-like humility and believing self-surrender, was the woman chosen to become the mother of the Saviour. In the sixth month after the birth of John the Baptist had been announced, the angel Gabriel appeared to her, and said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."—Luke i. 26 ff.

107. Meanwhile, Joseph of Nazareth, informed about these things in a dream, takes to himself his betrothed bride, Mary; and as at this time the Emperor Augustus had

given orders for a general census of the empire, Joseph, as a son of David, had to go with her to Bethlehem, his ancestral city. There Mary bare the child, and laid him in a manger, for there was no room for them in the inn. The first announcement of His birth is brought, not to the Scribes in Jerusalem, but to the shepherds in the field. The glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the angel of the Lord gave them the joyful tidings. When the angel was gone, the shepherds went and saw the child, and told what had happened to them. Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds praised and glorified God.—Matt. i. 18-25; Luke ii. 1-20.

108. On the eighth day the child was circumcised, according to the law, and received the name Jesus (i.e., saviour), which the angel had before indicated to Mary, and also to Joseph in his dream. Thus, as by His birth, He became subject to the universal laws and conditions of human life, so by His circumcision He is subjected to the specially Jewish laws and conditions, as one of the seed of Abraham.—Luke ii. 21.

In further conformity with the regulations of the law, He was presented in the temple on the fortieth day after the manner of Jewish purification, with the offering appointed for a firstborn. In the temple there meet him two Israelites indeed, Simeon and Anna, who speak of Him as the Saviour, and praise the Lord because of Him.—Luke ii. 22 ff.

109. As the shepherds in the fields, who were the first fruits of the Jews, had the band of angels to guide them to the child Jesus, so the wise men from the East, the first fruits of the heathen, had his star which appeared to them in their home. Probably acquainted with the wide-spread

anticipation that the King of the world should come from Judea, and perhaps with many prophecies of the chosen people (for Daniel had been chief of the wise men), and correctly connecting the remarkable heavenly phenomenon with a corresponding phenomenon on earth, they hastened to Jerusalem with the question, "Where is the new born king of the Jews?" Herod and all Jerusalem were terrified. The assembled Scribes told them that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, and the wise men, hastening thither, worshipped the child, and gave Him gifts. Herod had commanded them to tell him where they found the child, but God commanded them in a dream to return another way. When Herod saw that he was deceived, he ordered, to make all sure, that all children in Bethlehem under two years old should be killed. But Joseph, warned by an angel in a dream, had already fled with the child and His mother to Egypt. Thence he returned, according to new instructions from God, after the death of Herod, and dwelt in Nazareth, where he carried on his trade as a carpenter.—Matt. ii.

110 There is only one narrative preserved for us of the youth of Jesus—that, namely, in which we are told of His going to Jerusalem with His parents, when twelve years of age, astonishing the Scribes in the temple with His intelligent questions, and then giving to His mother, who has found Him on the third day after anxious search, the significant answer, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business,"—a saying in which the first clear consciousness of His person and work begins to show itself. Beyond this, we can only conceive of the youth of Christ as passed in quiet obedience, and eager learning and searching of the Scriptures, as Scrip-

ture itself tells us that He grew in "wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man."—Luke ii. 40-52.

111. When John was baptizing in Jordan, Jesus also (then nearly thirty years old) came to be baptized by him. John would have refused, recognizing Jesus as in Himself without sin, and needing no repentance. But Jesus answered that so it became Him to fulfil all righteousness: He must receive the baptism of repentance, as bearing the sin of the world; it is His consecration for His sin-atoning work. Hence there was connected with it His Messianic anointing with the Holy Ghost; for when He was baptized, the heaven opened, and the Spirit came down upon Him like a dove, and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."—Matt. iii. 13 ff.

But before Jesus came forth publicly as the Messiah, He was driven of the Spirit into the wilderness, that He might be tempted of the devil. The tempter set before Him three several temptations; but the Redeemer repelled him with the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; and when the devil left Him, the angels came and ministered to Him.—Matt. iv. 1-11; Luke iv. 1 ff.

112. Of the twelve disciples of Jesus, John and Andrew, formerly disciples of John the Baptist, were the first who joined themselves to Him. Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus. Philip was called by the Lord himself, and brings Nathanael (probably the same as Bartholomew). John and James, Andrew and Peter, were fishermen on the Sea of Galilee. At their second formal and symbolical call, Christ promised to make them fishers of men. John, Peter, and James formed the narrowest circle of the disciples, the twelve a wider, and the seventy the widest of all. The twelve left all, and followed Jesus; the seventy

remained in their earthly calling. The twelve were sent out among the tribes of Israel, to preach and to heal the sick; and afterwards the seventy also were sent out, two and two, for the same purpose. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, both members of the council, are also named as secret disciples of Jesus. From fear of the Jews, Nicodemus ventured to come to Jesus only by night, yet he had courage to raise his voice in the council against unjust accusations brought against Him, and came publicly forth as His disciple after His death, joining with Joseph in caring for the body of the crucified One.

113. As a Prophet, Christ had to make known to us the whole counsel and gracious will of God for our salvation, for the law and prophets of the Old Testament taught only by way of preparation, and therefore, imperfectly. But Jesus said that He had come to fulfil the law and the prophets, and He did so, in word and deed, in His doctrine and in His life. This refers to the moral law as well as the ceremonial; though, as the former was given for its own sake, and the latter, like the promises, for the sake of that to which it pointed, the fulfilment of the one has a different result from the fulfilment of the other. The moral law was sanctioned and confirmed by its fulfilment for all eternity; the ceremonial law lost, by its fulfilment, its binding powers. The teaching of Christ while He was on earth did not, it is true, exhaust the whole counsel of God for our salvation, or afford us complete religious knowledge, for He told His disciples that He had much to say to them, but they could not bear it now. But what the Spirit of Christ, poured out after His ascension, taught the disciples, was the teaching of Christ in the same sense as His own words were;

and they have faithfully handed it down for our instruction.

114. Shortly after He entered on His work as a Teacher, Christ delivered the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v.-vii.), in which He brought out the Christian conception of the kingdom of God in contrast with the carnal Jewish idea of it, and that specially, as regards the law and the various duties of religion, giving His own heart-searching views of these in opposition to the outward, and self-righteous views of the Pharisees. The general progress of the kingdom of God, the hardening of the Pharisees against it, and their consequent exclusion from it, He set forth in His various parables, in some of which the reception of the heathen to the same rank in the kingdom with the original covenant people also appears.

115. But the person of Christ is the central point of all evangelical preaching and knowledge. Only by faith in Him, as the Son of God become man, can we obtain eternal life. Therefore the Redeemer makes very special reference in His teaching to the significance of His person. He often designates himself the Son of man, expressing the reality of His human nature, but just as often He speaks of himself as truly divine and equal with the Father. His redeeming work was one of the things which His disciples could not yet understand, but He sowed in their hearts, in easily remembered sayings, the seeds of the truth which should afterwards bear fruit under the blessing of the Spirit, speaking of himself as the good shepherd, the bread of life, the way, the truth, and the life, &c., and plainly pointing out the necessity of His suffering, death, and resurrection. From all who would partake of His redemption, He calls for repentance and faith, and unreserved self-surrender to Him, teaching

them that they must enter into a real fellowship of life with Him (John xv. 5).

116. The dominion over nature, which was given to the first man, was lost by sin. The Second Adam regains it, and that in higher measure than at first, since now there are evil powers and conditions overcome by the power of the creative Word which is in personal union with the man Jesus. This is the miraculous power of Jesus, by which He is proved to be the Messiah, and the Son of God, and the exercise of which, in the removal of the consequences of sin, forms an essential part of His redeeming work.

Among His miracles are some in which He showed His power over material nature, even in which He subdued the bodily diseases of man, and even death itself, and others in which He overcame that fearful form of disease, demoniacal possession. From all whom He healed, the Redeemer called for faith, for the bodily healing was intended to lead on to the spiritual healing; and He caused His power to work upon the sick either directly or through some earthly means according to the spiritual condition of those who sought His help.

117. Jesus carried on His work only among the covenant people, but He repeatedly spoke of the time when this restriction should be withdrawn, and He charged His disciples, before His ascension, to carry the gospel to all the nations of the earth. Only occasionally, and in individual cases, where He found faith, did He help and teach heathens and Samaritans.

118. His powerful teaching and His miracles soon attracted attention among the mass of the people. They easily recognised that a higher power dwelt within Him. Sick people were brought from all quarters that He might heal them. and many believed in him when they saw His

miracles. Had He not carefully avoided it, they would have called him to be the Messianic King long ere the time was come. But the self-righteous and carnally-minded were displeased because of the condemnation He passed on their unbelief, because He failed to come up to the false hopes which they entertained of the Messiah, and because He had no toleration for their hypocritical law-righteousness. In Galilee, where He dwelt longest, He was least esteemed; even His own brethren did not at first believe in Him. Even in Judea it was no better, for there they sought His life. His most decided opponents were the Pharisees, and from their influence sprung the disfavour of the people. They could not deny His miracles, but they traced them to the devil. They agreed to excommunicate every one who should acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, and only fear of the people restrained them from actual violence.

119. The nearer the time came when Jesus was to finish His work by death and resurrection, the more was His holy soul occupied with thoughts of it. Hitherto He had given His disciples only occasional hints of this end of His earthly work. But now, during His last sojourn in Galilee, He announced to them plainly that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things, and be slain, and the third day rise again. Then a new temptation came upon Him, stronger perhaps than that which He encountered at His entrance on His office, because it came from the mouth of a disciple, and seemed an expression of hearty love. Peter, who had immediately before made his believing confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," took Him aside and said, "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." But the Redeemer, recognizing in this expression of carnal love

an inspiration of Satan, said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

120. Six days later Jesus took Peter and James and John and led them apart to a high mountain to pray. The disciples fell asleep, and when they awoke Jesus was glorified before them, and with Him were Moses and Elias, who spoke of His approaching death. Peter, carried away by the glory of this heavenly vision, exclaimed, "Master, it is good for us to be here, and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias." While he was speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice spoke out of the cloud: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him." The disciples fell on their faces in prayer, and when Jesus raised them up the vision had vanished. With this event the second stage of our Lord's official life begins, as the first did with his baptism. Since his baptism he has been living in active obedience; henceforth he is to maintain specially a passive obedience. And in the event with which this second stage opens, the conclusion of it is shadowed forth, the glorification, namely, of His earthly nature in his resurrection.—Matt. xvi. 13 xvii. ; Mark viii., ix. ; Luke ix.

121. Christ now journeyed towards Jerusalem for the third and last time during His public ministry. Six days before the feast He came to Bethany. There an entertainment was prepared for Him in the house of Simon the leper, when Mary, to whom our Lord's repeated announcements of His approaching death were not unknown, took a glass of costly ointment, poured it on the Redeemer's head, anointed His feet, and dried them with her hair. Judas Iscariot complained of what he thought a useless waste of a sum which might have been given to the poor. But Jesus



defended Mary's act, as an expression of the tenderest and most considerate love. In striking contrast to this self-sacrificing love of Mary is the covetousness of Judas, who went to the chief priests and said, "What will you give me and I will betray Him unto you?" They offered him thirty pieces of silver (the price of a slave, Exod. xxi. 32), but did not consider that in so doing they were involuntarily fulfilling the Scripture, Zech. xi. 12-14. Judas sought his opportunity to betray Him.—John xii. 1; Math. xxvi.; Mark xiv.

On the following day (a Sunday) Jesus prepared to enter Jerusalem. Applying to Himself the prophecy, Zech. ix. 9, and so formally and publicly declaring Himself to be the Messiah, He rides upon an ass's colt into the Holy city. As soon as the news of His approach was spread, all the people, who were gathered in numbers to the feast, hastened to meet Him with palm branches; they spread their clothes in the way, and shouted, "Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, as King of Israel! Hosanna in the highest." But the Pharisees said among themselves, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing; behold the world is gone after Him"; and as some called upon Him to restrain the people, He answered: "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out;" for His Messianic dignity must for once receive full recognition. As the Lord came again into the city the next day (Monday)—for in the evening He retired at this time to the quiet family circle at Bethany—He pronounced the symbolical curse upon the fruitless fig-tree, and then went into the Temple to cleanse it a second time in His prophetic power from the traffic in cattle and money-changing which had again crept in. Even the children now cried, "Hosanna

to the son of David," and when the Pharisees expressed their displeasure, Jesus said : "Have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."—Matt. xxi. ; Mark xi. ; Luke xix. ; John xii.

122. Immediately after the raising of Lazarus the Sanhedrim had resolved to put Jesus to death. "If we let Him thus alone," they said, "all men will believe on Him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation ;" and Caiaphas the high priest said : "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not,"—a saying in which, along with the cunning and malice of the man, the prophetic gift of the high priest's office spoke out, unawares to him, for the last time—John xi. 46-53. The events of the last few days brought this resolution of the Sanhedrim to maturity. As Jesus was teaching in the Temple on the following day (Tuesday) the chief priests and elders demanded His authority for His prophetic work. As this lay partly in the mission of John the Baptist, Jesus met them with this other question, whether the baptism of John were from heaven or of men? When they answered that they did not know, the Redeemer replied, "Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things ;" and added several parables to make his enemies aware how they were excluding themselves from the kingdom of God. Upon this followed new consultations of the Pharisees, in consequence of which they allied themselves with the courtiers of Herod, to put to him a question, by His answer to which He must draw upon himself either the hatred of the people, or the judicial interference of the Roman government, namely, whether it were lawful to pay tribute to ~~Cæsar~~ or not.

But the Lord perceived their cunning, and told them that because they had not given to God what was His, they must now, as a merited chastisement, give to Cæsar what was Cæsar's. The power of truth in Christ's answer, and the consciousness of guilt thereby awakened, broke the snare in which they thought to take Him, and they went away ashamed. The profane sophistry of the Sadducees fares no better at His hands; and when, in His turn, He sets before the scribes the sacred enigma, how David's Son is called also David's Lord, they cannot solve it. After that, none of them dared ask Him any more questions.—Matt. xxi., xxii.

123. Jesus then gave the people and His disciples a most emphatic testimony against the hypocrisy and legal righteousness of the Pharisees, unfolding in eight woes the hidden depths of their ungodly heart, and announcing that this sinfulness of theirs was irrevocably bringing down complete destruction on the Holy City and the Temple. Soon after, when Jesus was come with His disciples to the Mount of Olives, where the city and the temple lay in all their splendour before their eyes, He described to them, in a rich prophetic picture, accompanied by parables, the development of the kingdom of God in the latter times, and the judgments to fall upon Jerusalem and upon the world at last. Jesus then withdrew from Jerusalem to spend the two last days in retirement with His disciples. His enemies, meanwhile, assembled in the palace of the high priest to take council how they might seize Him by stealth and kill Him. They said, "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people," but circumstances, and the heat of their rage, impelled them to the immediate execution of their plan, that the purpose of God might be carried out, that Jesus

should die on the very day of the paschal feast.—Matt. xxiii.-xxv.

124. On the first day of unleavened bread (Thursday, 14th Nisan) the Lord sent Peter and John to prepare the paschal supper. When the hour was come, and the Lord had sat down at table with the twelve, the feet of the guests should, according to the custom of the Jews, first have been washed. None of the disciples felt disposed in humility to undertake this lowly office. Jesus, therefore, rose Himself and washed their feet as an example to them of humility, and to signify to them that before the feast of communion with Him they must be cleansed from the impurities contracted in their daily walking in the world. Then the paschal supper began. While they ate of it Jesus said: "Verily I say unto you, one of you shall betray me;" and after He had indicated whom He meant by giving the sop, He said to Judas: "That thou doest, do quickly." Judas must now finally decide. But after the sop Satan entered into his heart. He went immediately out; "and it was night" in him as well as around him. Hardly had the traitor left the company, when the love of the Redeemer broke forth in the solemn words: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him," &c. The paschal supper was by this time finished, but Jesus took again the bread, gave thanks and brake it, and gave to His disciples, saying: "Take, eat, this is my body broken for you; this do in remembrance of me." After the same manner also He took the cup, and said: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." On this sacred action followed the last discourses of Jesus to His disciples—John xiv.-xvii.—in which an overflowing fulness of love, such as dwelt only in the heart of the Son

of man, is poured out in words of greater beauty and power than ever passed the lips of man.—Matt. xxvi. ; Mark xiv ; Luke xxii ; John xiii. ; 1 Cor. xi.

125. After supper Christ betook himself with His disciples to Gethsemane, a garden on the Mount of Olives, known to Judas as a favourite resort of the Lord. Filled with thoughts of His approaching suffering, He told the disciples that this night they should all be offended in Him. Peter feeling his own love and faith, but without experience of his weakness, answered impetuously : “ Though all should be offended in thee, yet will not I be offended ; ” and when the Lord plainly said : “ This night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice, ” he persevered in his self-confidence, and said : “ Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. ” So also said all the disciples. In the garden He took Peter, James, and John apart, and began to tremble and be sore afraid. For the hour was now come when the prince of darkness was permitted again to try his power on the Son of man, bringing all the terrors of the fearful death He had to meet, to bear upon His pure and tender soul. But as in His former temptation, so now, He overcomes by unconditioned surrender to the will of God. He prayed : “ If it be possible let this cup pass from me ; ” if what I have already suffered can atone for the sins of the world, spare me this last cup of suffering ; “ nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. ” A second and a third time He went and said : “ Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done ; ” and He wrestled with death, and prayed more earnestly, so that His sweat fell like great drops of blood to the ground. But an angel from heaven appeared and strengthened Him. By this time there was come a band of men with swords and

staves, sent by the council under the guidance of the traitor. Jesus met them firmly and calmly with the question: "Whom seek ye? I am he." Struck by the majesty of His person, the rude servants fell back, but the traitor had even then the Satanic courage to approach the Master with salutation and kiss—the pre-arranged sign. The servants then ventured to draw near and seize Him. Peter, rash and fiery, always thinking first of human help, drew his sword and cut off the ear of one of the high priest's servants; but the Lord touched his ear and healed him, saying to Peter: "Thinkest thou I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels. But how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" When the servants made as if they would take the disciples also, they all fled.—Matt. xxvi. 30-56; Mark xiv; Luke xxii; John xviii.

126. When the guard had bound Jesus, they carried Him first to Annas, who, as formerly high priest and father-in-law of the present high priest Caiaphas, was held in great respect, and was specially interested in the seizure of Christ. Hence they led Him to Caiaphas, with whom most of the members of the Sanhedrim—and those the most hostile—were assembled for a preliminary investigation. The high priest first asked Christ of His disciples and His teaching. The Redeemer reminded him that He had always taught publicly in the synagogues and in the temple, before all the Jews, of whom he might inquire about these things. The witnesses who were already retained now came forward; but their testimonies did not correspond. But when the high priest asked of Jesus upon oath, whether He were the Christ, the Son of God, He answered in full consciousness of His Divine mission: "Thou

hast said, I am He ; hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest rent his clothes and said : " What need have we of further witnesses ; ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye ? " They answered : " He is guilty of death." Then the rude crowd of attendants thought themselves justified in abusing the condemned. They spat in His face, struck Him with their fists, covered His eyes, and said : " Prophecy to us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee ? " So ended this tumultuous proceeding. Early in the morning a solemn sitting of the Sanhedrim was held, and the trial renewed. The sentence " He is guilty of death," was soon passed, and as they had no longer the power of life and death, they handed Him over as a guilty rebel to the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate—Matt. xxvi. 57, ff.; Mark xiv. 53 ; Luke xxii. 54 ; John xviii. 12, ff.

Peter had followed at a distance the band of men who carried away his Master, and succeeded in gaining admittance to the high priest's palace. The anxiety of his heart might be read on his countenance, and attracted the attention of the bystanders. The doorkeeper turned to him with the question : " Art not thou one of this Man's disciples ? " Peter, forgetting all warnings, answered : " I know not what thou sayest." Then the cock crew for the first time, but even this warning voice was in vain. When another maid expressed the same suspicion, he denied his Lord and Master the second time ; nay, when the bystanders grew more urgent and said : " Thy speech bewrayeth thee ; thou wast in the garden with Him ; " he began to curse and to swear, " I know not the Man." Then the cock crowed the second time, and at the same time he encountered a sorrowful

rebuking glance from the Redeemer. Peter remembered the warning words of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly.—The traitor Judas had not expected that a sentence of death would be passed upon the Lord. He repented of his disgraceful deed. In vain he brought back the wages of his treachery, and declared to the council that he had betrayed innocent blood. He was repulsed with scorn: "What is that to us; see thou to that." In despair he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple, and went and hanged himself. The chief priests resolved that they could not put the money into the sacred treasury, because it was the price of blood, but determined to buy a potter's field with it to bury strangers in. Thus the prophecy of Zechariah (xi. 12-14) was in this particular fulfilled.—Matt. xxvi. 69 ff.; Mark xiv. 66 ff.; Luke xxii. 56 ff.

127. Before the Sanhedrim Jesus was accused of blasphemy. Knowing that such a charge would weigh little with the heathen procurator, they sought before him to represent His Messiahship as a political crime. "We found this fellow," they said, "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He Himself is Christ a King." Pilate accordingly asked Him: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered: "My kingdom is not of this world." And when Pilate asked: "Art thou a King then?" Jesus said: "I am a King. For this end came I into the world to bear witness to the truth." Pilate, carelessly throwing out the question, "What is truth?" without waiting for the answer, went out to the Jews and said: "I find no fault in Him." They, however, urged him with yet stronger accusations, until, as they mentioned Galilee as Jesus' birth-place, Pilate laid hold of this and sent Him to Herod Antipas,

the Tetrarch of Galilee, who was in Jerusalem at the feast, hoping thereby to be well rid of the whole matter. But as Jesus would do no miracle before Herod, nor answer any of his many questions, he sent Him back to Pilate, after his courtiers had in mockery clothed Him in a white garment as a candidate for the Jewish throne. Pilate now again sought in vain to appease the people; in vain he offered them, according to the custom at the feast, their choice between Christ and Barabbas, a noted murderer and rebel; they chose Barabbas, and demanded the crucifixion of Christ. To increase the perplexity of the procurator, his wife sent him a message: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him." When he saw that the fierce multitude was not to be moved, he took water, and washed his hands before them, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this just Man; see ye to it." The whole people answered: "His blood be on us and on our children." Pilate made one more attempt—he sought to move the sympathy of the people for the innocent. Accordingly he caused Him to be scourged; the soldiers put a purple robe on Him, and a crown of thorns, gave Him a reed in His hand, and mocked and spat upon Him. Pilate brought Him before the people in this attire, testified once more to His innocence and said, "Behold, the Man!" But ever more wildly did they cry, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" and when at last the chief priests threatened to accuse Him to Caesar, every feeling of justice in Pilate's heart was quenched by fear; he sat down on the judgment-seat and pronounced the sentence of crucifixion.—John xviii. 28 ff; Matt. xxvii. 2 ff; Mark xv. 1 ff; Luke xxiii. 1 ff.

128. On the way to the place of execution, Jesus had to

carry his cross Himself. But outside the city the soldiers laid hold of one passing by, named Simon, and compelled him to take the heavy burden from Him. Two malefactors were crucified along with Him on Golgotha. When they offered Him, out of compassion, stupefying wine, He refused such sorry consolation; for it became Him, the conqueror of death, to meet death with clear and firm glance, and to bear to the full all his terrors. When the soldiers had done their work with Him, the first word of the crucified One was a prayer for His executioners: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Pilate, to the great scandal of the Jews, caused the words, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," to be fastened on the cross in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and thus became, unwittingly, the first who proclaimed to all nations the great salvation which had come for all the world. Then the soldiers parted His garments amongst them, and cast lots for his coat, that the Scripture might be fulfilled—Ps. xxii. 19. Thus did the Son of God and the King of the World hang, sacrificed on the cross as on an altar, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, full of griefs and sorrows. Yet the measure of His sufferings was not yet full. Those who passed by blasphemed Him, and the priests and scribes mocked Him with daring derision. One of the malefactors who were crucified with Him also derided Him; but the other rebuked him, and said to Jesus: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The Lord answered him, as if the cross had been His judgment-throne: "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Then He cast a look of the most loving and tender care upon His mother, and said, pointing out John, "Woman, behold thy Son;" and!

then to the disciple: "Behold thy mother." From that hour that disciple took her to his own home.—Matt. xxvii. 31, ff.; Mark xv. 20, ff.; Luke xxiii. 26, ff.; John xix. 25, ff.

129. From the sixth hour to the ninth (twelve to three o'clock) there was darkness over the whole land, the sun withholding its quickening light, while the Prince of Life wrestled with death. The Redeemer hung the while in silence on the cross. But when the moment of death drew near, when His holy soul should tear itself from the fetters of the tortured body, he had still one struggle to go through, the hardest and the last. The terrors of death pressed upon Him; He must taste the wages of the world's sin in all its fearful bitterness, without assistance and strength from above; and He cried out, in the words of the 22d Psalm; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Fainting, He cried, "I thirst," and they reached Him a sponge filled with vinegar. After this refreshment He said, "It is finished! Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." Then He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. Thus was finished what for near two thousand years the temple-service had dimly prefigured; and the veil of the temple was rent, to show that now there was free access for all to the throne of grace. Thus was finished what the groaning creation had anxiously waited for, what those who lived and died in faith had longed for; therefore the earth shook, the rocks rent, and the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Nay, even the heathen centurion and his rough soldiers, struck by the significance of such signs, exclaimed: "Truly this was the Son

of God." Matt. xxvii. 46, ff; Mark xv. 33, ff; Luke xxiii. 44, ff; John xix. 28, ff.

130. Because the Sabbath began in the evening of the same day, the Jews wished the bodies to be taken down from the cross, and their legs to be broken, to make sure of their death. Pilate allowed it; but when the soldiers who were sent saw that Jesus was already dead, they did not break His legs (Exod. xii. 46), but one of them pierced His side with a spear (Zech. xii. 10), and there came out blood and water. Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Council, who, for fear of his associates, had hitherto been a secret disciple of Jesus, after asking leave of the governor, took charge of the sacred body, and buried it, with the help of Nicodemus, in his own new grave, and rolled a great stone to the grave's mouth. Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James, followed them, and saw the grave, and how His body was laid in it. The next day the priests came to Pilate and got from him soldiers to watch the grave that His disciples might not take away the body and say that He had risen.—Matt. xxvii. 57 ff; Mark xv. 42 ff; Luke xxiii. 50 ff; John xix. 31 ff.

131. Through the fulness of Divine power that dwelt in Him, the Redeemer in the midst of death conquered death. On the Sunday morning, very early, shortly before sunrise, Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome went to the grave to anoint with spices the body of their beloved Lord. But ere they came He had risen. Heaven and earth had celebrated the moment; the earth quaked, and an angel, whose countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, came down from heaven, rolled away the stone from the door, and sat upon it. The soldiers who watched the grave had seen

all this, and fell in terror to the ground. Mary Magdalene had outrun the other women, and arrived before them at the grave. But when she saw that the grave was empty, she ran back terrified another way, and told Peter and John what she had seen. Meanwhile the other women came to the grave. They went in and found the angel, who told them of the Lord's resurrection, reminded them of His prophecies, and spoke of Galilee as the place where they should see Him. In consequence of the news which Mary Magdalene had brought them, Peter and John hastened also to the grave, went in and looked round. They had hardly left when Mary Magdalene came a second time and alone. She looks in weeping, sees two angels sitting, and says to them: "They have taken away my Lord, I know not where they have laid Him." As she turned round, the Lord himself stood before her. She took Him for the gardener, but when He said to her in the well known tones of love, "Mary!" she joyfully cried, "Rabboni!" (Master,) and wished to embrace Him. But Jesus said to her, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father,"—it is not yet time to keep Him with His own.—Matt. xxviii. 1, ff.; Mark xvi. 1, ff.; Luke xxiv. 1, ff.; John xx. 1, ff.

132. The same afternoon, two disciples were walking to Emmaus, and speaking of all these things that had happened. The Lord joined them, but they knew Him not. He entered into their conversation, and when they confessed that they did not know what to think of these things, He began with Moses, and expounded to them from all the Scriptures what was said of Himself. They did not recognise Him until He sat at meat with them in Emmaus in His wonted way; and when they came to know Him, He vanished from their sight. Immediately they re-

turned to Jerusalem, and told the assembled disciples what had happened to them. While they were still speaking of it, Jesus himself came into the midst of them, though the doors were shut, and saluted them. They were terrified, and thought they saw a spirit. To convince them of the contrary, He showed them His hands and His feet, and ate before them. Thomas, however, was not with them, and when the other disciples told him they had seen the Lord, he said, "Except I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe." When, therefore, eight days later, the disciples were together, and Thomas among them, the Lord came in and said to Thomas: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and thrust thy hand into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." Then all doubt vanishes from the disciple's mind, and he cries out, "My Lord and my God."—Mark xvi. 12, ff.; Luke xxiv. 13, ff.; John xx. 19, ff.

133. The feast being now over, the disciples returned to Galilee, their home, to which also the Lord had repeatedly directed them. Peter had fallen so deeply that he needed a formal restoration to his apostolic office. This he receives by the Lake of Tiberias, where he was first called to be a fisher of men, and with a repetition of the same symbol. Along with John and other disciples he has been fishing all night in vain. In the morning Jesus appears on the shore, without being recognized. By His advice they throw the net on the right side of the ship, and take so many fish that they cannot draw it in. John exclaims, "It is the Lord!" and Peter throws himself into the water to reach the shore before the ship. There the Lord provides a meal, foreshadowing the heavenly feast after

the completed work of the world. After the meal he asks Peter three times, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" Peter's former presumption is gone, and in humility, but conscious of his love, he says, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee;" on which the Lord each time appoints him his work of feeding His sheep, and tells him that he shall be honoured not only to labour but to suffer for Him. After this the Lord appeared to an assembly of all His adherents, five hundred in number, on a mountain in Galilee to which He had directed them; He appointed the apostles to be preachers of the gospel in all the world, instituted baptism as the sacrament of regeneration, and took leave of them, with the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."—John xxi. 1 ff.; Matt. xxviii. 16 ff.

134. When Christ had manifested Himself to His disciples for forty days after His resurrection as the risen One, the time came for Him to return to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. The eleven disciples had, probably by the Lord's appointment, gone to Jerusalem shortly before Pentecost, to await in quiet fellowship the outpouring of the Spirit. He assembled them for the last time on the Mount of Olives to be the witnesses of His entrance into glory as they had been on the same mount witnesses of His humiliation, His sorrow and heaviness. After He had promised them the power of the Holy Ghost, and given them their commission to be witnesses for Him to the uttermost part of the earth, He lifted up His hands and blessed them, and was then taken up in their sight, and a cloud hid Him from their eyes, concealing the incomprehensible mystery of His glorification. As they looked after Him there stood by them two angels in white garments, who said, "This Jesus who

has been taken from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." Then they returned to Jerusalem.

The state into which Christ, the God-man, has entered by His ascension, is described in Scripture under the figure of sitting at the right hand of God. By this is meant the almighty carrying on and completing in heaven of His earthly work, as the first-born among many brethren drawing us to Himself, and making us at last fellow heirs of His glory.—Mark xvi. 19, ff.; Luke xxiv. 50, ff.; Acts i. 4, ff.

Section II.

THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL BY THE APOSTLES.

135. In the person of the Redeemer salvation was won. In His death He had offered an all-sufficient sacrifice for the sin of the world, and in His resurrection He had brought life and immortality to light. But salvation in Christ is of no avail to mankind so long as it is not personally appropriated. The communication and application of redemption is the work of the Holy Spirit. The next condition of progress in the kingdom of God was, therefore, the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon all flesh. Salvation is appropriated on the side of man by *faith*. And faith comes by *hearing*, and therefore Christ gave commission to His disciples to *preach* the gospel to every creature. And hearing comes by the *Word of God*, since God alone can surely proclaim the wonderful mysteries of

His grace. Therefore the apostles needed an immediate Divine inspiration by which their teaching was preserved from all error, and the full knowledge of salvation planted in their souls. It is not enough, moreover, that they should preach orally, to preserve the Word for all countries and all ages, free from human confusion and error; and, therefore, the great work of this period was the establishment of the New Testament Scriptures, as the unchangeable foundation for all future preaching. Another not less important work was the founding of the Church, for the accomplishment of which, under Himself, the Holy Spirit chose the apostles, and endowed them with extraordinary gifts.

136. After the ascension of the Lord, the disciples, to the number of one hundred and twenty, remained together in Jerusalem as He had directed them, continuing in prayer and supplication for the promised outpouring of the Spirit. They have, however, first of all, to restore the band of apostles to the significant number of twelve, which had been broken in upon by the apostasy of Judas, that as soon as they receive the Spirit they may go forth as messengers of salvation to the twelve tribes of Israel. Of the two who were fitted for the office, because they had been from the first eye and ear-witnesses of the words and deeds of the Lord, Matthias was chosen by lot. The feast of Pentecost was now come. The disciples were together praying in their usual place of meeting. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled the whole house. A great mass of fire and light hovered over them, divided itself, and rested upon each of them in separate tongues of fire. Then they were all full of the Holy Ghost, and began to preach with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. The strange

natural phenomenon, by which the miracle was accompanied, drew a multitude of people to the spot, many of them foreigners assembled at the feast. When each of them heard the unlearned Galileans speak of the great deeds of God in his own tongue, they were astonished and said, "What meaneth this?" But others made a mock of it and said, "These men are full of new wine." Then Peter stepped forth as the first preacher of salvation, telling them that now was fulfilled the prophecy of Joel of the outpouring of the Spirit upon all flesh; that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised up and set at His own right hand, had now poured out His Spirit upon His own. When they heard this, anxious about their soul's salvation, they said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter bid them repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus. They who received the word gladly, were baptized, and three hundred souls were that day added to the Church. Thus this New Testament Pentecost became the fulfilment of the Old Testament feast; for here the first-fruits of the great harvest of the world were offered to the Lord, and the New Testament Church founded and sealed by the Spirit.—Acts i. 13, ii. 1, ff.

137. The new converts continued in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer. The multitude of the believers was of one heart and one soul, and though they belonged for the most part to the poorest of the people, yet none of them lacked, for the richer of them sold their houses and lands, and formed a common treasury, from which the needy were supported as they required.—Acts ii. 42-47; iv. 32-37. But very soon hypocrisy showed itself in the midst of this glorious manifestation of Christian life. A man named Ananias

desired a good report for self-denying love of the brethren. In concert with his wife, he sold his property and brought a part of the price to the apostles, pretending that it was the whole. Peter recognised his hypocrisy, and rebuked him in the name of the Lord. Struck by the judgment of God, he fell down dead, as also did his wife who came in afterwards, and was guilty of the same deceit. Great fear came upon all the Church, and on as many as heard these things. Another blemish to be removed soon made itself manifest. The Church, and even the apostles in some measure, had not yet attained a full and clear understanding of the equal right of the Gentiles to partake of the blessings of salvation. Converts carried with them into the church their deep-rooted pride in their Judaism, and to those who cherished this feeling, even the Hellenistic Jews, because they stood nearer the Gentiles in their language and manners, seemed unworthy of the same privileges as themselves, even in outward matters. At all events these Hellenists complained that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. To correct such abuses the apostles chose and set apart by laying on of hands seven deacons, (all Hellenists, as it seems,) to take charge of the poor—a proceeding which was the first step in the liberation of the Church from the fetters of ceremonial Judaism.—Acts v., vi.

138. The miraculous cure of a lame beggar at one of the gates of the temple, which Peter and John had effected in the name of Jesus, had attracted extraordinary attention, and drawn a multitude around the apostles. Peter used the opportunity to preach Jesus to the people, with so remarkable success, that the numbers of the church increased to 5000 souls, besides women and children. But while they were still speaking, the temple-guard ap-

peared, sent by the Council, and took them up. Next morning they were brought before the Sanhedrim. They testified there that this man had been healed through the name of Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, but God had raised up. The man who had been healed was a testimony to their words that could not be set aside. The Council therefore contented themselves for this once with forbidding them to speak or teach in the name of Jesus. But the apostles answered: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." When they returned to their fellow-disciples, they all prayed together for boldness to speak the Word; and the place where they were met was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.—Acts iii., iv.

Meanwhile, the Church increased daily; the apostles wrought signs and wonders, so that the people revered them, and even from other towns besides Jerusalem the sick were brought to them to be healed. By this the enmity of the Council is roused anew. The apostles are taken and cast into prison. But the angel of the Lord opened the doors in the night and bid them go and preach in the temple. The Council assembled in the morning; but the officers report that though the prison was all secure the apostles were not there. Others announce that they are teaching in the temple. They are brought in and accused, but answer, "We must obey God rather than man." The Council meditates putting them to death; but this danger is averted by Gamaliel, who advises them to leave them in the hands of God. The apostles were let go, after they were scourged and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus. But they re-

joiced that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name, and ceased not to teach and preach in the temple and from house to house.—Acts v. 12-42.

139. As the Christians at first maintained the most careful observance of the ceremonial law, they were held in great respect by the people. The more, however, the perception of the universal import of Christianity gained upon them, and came into conflict with the dead ritualism of Judaism, the more was the hatred of the people roused against them. Stephen, the most notable of the deacons, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, gave more emphatic expression to this conviction than had been done before. A discussion with the presidents of the Hellenistic Synagogue, who could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit in which he spoke, afforded opportunity for charging him before the Council with being a blasphemer of the temple and the worship of God. With the brightness of the Spirit that was in him beaming forth in his countenance, he answered the accusation in a speech in which he expressed his firm faith in the Old Testament revelation of God, and showed how the wondrous grace of God had revealed itself in the whole history of Israel, in spite of their perverseness. The excitement of the Sanhedrim prevented him from finishing his discourse, he concluded, therefore, with a direct reference to their own hard-heartedness. They gnashed their teeth with rage; but he looked up to heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said: "Behold, I see heaven open, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." Then they cried out, shut their ears, dragged him out of the city, and stoned him (39 A.D.).—Acts vi. 8, vii.

140. The martyrdom of Stephen was the signal for a

general persecution of the Church. The most active instrument in this work was Saul, who sought the Christians in their own houses and put them in prison, both men and women. In a short time the Church at Jerusalem was scattered; only the apostles remained at their post. This scattering was followed by an unexpected blessing, for thereby the preaching of the gospel, hitherto confined within so narrow a circle, was spread over all the cities of Judæa and Samaria. Philip, one of the seven deacons, was the principal preacher in Samaria, and reaped richly the good seed which had been already sown by the Lord. A sorcerer also, famous in that district, called Simon, was convinced by the signs and wonders which Philip wrought of the Divine origin of the new doctrine, and was baptized. As soon as the news, that Samaria had received the Word, came to Jerusalem, the apostles sent thither Peter and John. They prayed over those who had been baptized, and imparted to them, by laying on of hands, the (miraculous) gifts of the Holy Ghost. When Simon saw this he offered them money if they would give him the power of imparting the Holy Ghost to whomsoever he would. Full of holy indignation Peter answered: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money," and called upon him to repent of the wickedness of his heart. Simon expressed penitence, but it did not last, for, as we are elsewhere informed, he continued afterwards to practise his magic arts.

At the call of an angel Philip betakes himself to the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, and there meets the chamberlain of Queen Candace, of Meroe, in Ethiopia, who had come to Jerusalem to worship, and was now on his return. Philip, coming up to his chariot, hears that he is reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, and asks him, "Understandest

thou what thou readest?" The eunuch in reply seeks an explanation, upon which Philip preaches to him the gospel of Jesus. When they came to water the eunuch asked to be baptized. Philip answered, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest." He professes his faith and is baptized. He then goes on his way joyfully, and Philip, carried away by the Spirit, is found at Ashdod, whence, preaching as he went, he came to Cæsarea, which he chose for his residence.—Acts viii.

141. Paul, or according to his Jewish name Saul, was born at Tarsus in Cilicia. His parents who were Jews of the tribe of Benjamin (2 Cor. xi. 22; Phil. iii. 5), and possessed the right of Roman citizenship (Acts xvi. 37; xxii. 25 ff.), sent him early in his life to Jerusalem, to the school of the renowned Pharisee Gamaliel (Acts xxii. 3) that he might be taught in the Scriptures. At the same time he also learned a trade, according to the custom then prevalent, namely that of a tent-maker (Acts xviii. 3). He gave himself up with his whole heart to Pharisaism, and was zealous not only for the truths which it contained, but also for the errors which had grown out of it. Thus his disposition towards Christianity could not fail to be hostile. He hated the new doctrine and its adherents with the whole force of his fiery spirit. He triumphantly assisted in the stoning of Stephen, and knew since that time no more sacred duty than to seek out and imprison the hated Christians. His zeal extended even beyond Jerusalem, and with full powers from the high priest, he set out for Damascus to carry on his persecution there (40 A.D.)—But at this stage the hand of a stronger than he laid hold of him. Doubtless the joy with which Stephen met death and prayed for his enemies, could not fail to leave an impression on a man like Paul, which in the Lord's hand

wrought its secret work in his soul, even in the midst of his Pharisaic fanaticism. But now on the road to Damascus there suddenly shone round him a light from heaven, and he saw the Lord in the glory of His heavenly majesty (1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8). He was struck down to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me; I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." Trembling and terrified he answered, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord told him he should learn in Damascus. When Paul rose he was blinded by the splendour of the heavenly light, and had to be led by the men who accompanied him; and as outwardly in his body, so also inwardly in his soul, his natural strength was broken and his own light extinguished. He waited three days in Damascus, blind and helpless, in fasting and prayer. Meanwhile a disciple in Damascus, called Ananias, received from the Lord the commission to visit him, with the intimation that he is a chosen vessel to bear the name of the Lord before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. He came, laid his hand on Paul, and there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he saw, arose, and was baptized. Chosen of the Lord to be the apostle of the heathen, he was qualified for his work like the other apostles by being made an eye-witness of the Lord's resurrection in the bodily appearance which He made to him, and by receiving a personal call from Himself.

When Paul at once began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God, all who heard him were astonished, for they knew for what end he had come to Damascus. But he grew the more powerful, and pressed hard upon the Jews, affirming that Jesus is the Christ. During his three years' sojourn in Damascus he made a

journey into Arabia (Gal. i. 17), doubtless to labour for the cause of Christ. Meanwhile, he became an object of bitter hatred to the Jews in Damascus. They took counsel to kill him, and watched the gates day and night, that he might not escape. But the disciples let him over the wall in a basket, and he escaped to Jerusalem (three years after his conversion, 43 A.D., Gal. i. 18). There, however, the disciples would not trust him until Barnabas took up his case, and brought him to the Apostles. He then preached in Jerusalem the name of the Lord Jesus; but when his life was endangered there also, the disciples sent him away to Tarsus. He remained only fifteen days in Jerusalem. Of the Apostles only Peter and James were then there.—Acts ix. 1-30.

142. During this period the churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria enjoyed several years of undisturbed peace, which was richly blessed for their inward and outward growth. Peter at this time undertook a journey of visitation. At Lydda he healed a man who had been paralytic eight years, and at Joppa raised a disciple named Tabitha from the dead. These miracles did much to increase the church in that district.—Acts ix. 31 ff.

While Peter remained at Joppa he was taught by the Lord how the church should deal with a question that was becoming of growing importance, namely, how the Gentiles should be received among the Christians. The Apostles still thought that they should be subjected to circumcision and the observance of the ceremonial law; for they had not yet understood the full meaning of our Lord's words (Math. v. 17, 18). And it was important that the answer to this question should be given through Peter, who had hitherto believed himself most closely bound by the ceremonial law. Cornelius, the centurion

of an Italian cohort in Cæsarea, already a Proselyte of the gate, was one day visited, while he was praying, by an angel, who bid him send for Peter from Joppa, that he might tell him what to do. Peter himself had to be prepared for so extraordinary a mission. While the messengers of Cornelius were approaching Joppa, he was receiving instruction from God in a vision. He saw a vessel let down from heaven containing all kinds of unclean beasts, and he was bidden kill and eat. He answered: "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything common or unclean;" but the voice replied: "What God has cleansed that call not thou common." While he was still meditating on the meaning of the vision, the messengers arrived and asked for him, and the Spirit said to him: "Arise and go with them, nothing doubting, for I have sent them." Cornelius had meanwhile assembled all his relatives and friends, and when Peter came he narrated what had happened to him. Peter then declared that he was now convinced by what had occurred that God, in calling men to Christ, regards not any outward qualification, but only the inward preparation of the heart. He then preached to them Jesus Christ, and while he was speaking the Holy Ghost fell on all, who heard the word, so that they spake with tongues and praised God. Then Peter bid them all be baptized in the name of the Lord. When the news of this baptism reached Jerusalem, some objected to what Peter had done, but when he related the whole course of events they praised God and said: "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."—Acts x.

143. The persecution, which began with the stoning of Stephen, had scattered the seed of the word as far as

Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. The fugitives spoke the word to none but the Jews. Some Hellenists, however, among them began to preach to the Gentiles in Antioch. The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed. When the Church in Jerusalem learned this they sent Barnabas, who saw with joy the growth of the new Church, and after he had exhorted them to steadfastness in the faith, went to Tarsus to bring Paul to this rich field of labour. Antioch became the centre for the spread of Christianity among the Gentiles; and there the way was prepared for its complete liberation from the fetters of Judaism. There, accordingly, the name "Christians" was first used, in which its independence of Judaism was recognised.—Acts xi. 19, ff.

After fourteen years of rest, a new persecution broke out in the year 44, at the instigation of Herod Agrippa, who sought thereby to gain the favour of the people. James, the brother of John, was beheaded, and Peter also was imprisoned. But the night before he was to have been put to death, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in the prison, and his chains fell from his hands. The angel led him out into the street, and then he knew that what had happened was no vision, but reality. He hastened to the house of Mary, the mother of Mark, told the Christians there assembled of his deliverance, and then fled from Jerusalem. The death of the king shortly after secured a return of peace to the Church.—Acts xii. 1, ff.

144. After Paul and Barnabas had been labouring for a year in the Church at Antioch, they set out (45 A.D.) by the appointment of the Holy Spirit, on a great missionary journey. They sailed first to Cyprus, the native island of Barnabas. At Paphos, the capital of the island, *the pro-consul*, Sergius Paulus, one of those thoughtful

men among the Gentiles, who searched anxiously into every new doctrine, desired to hear the word of God. A Jewish sorcerer, called Bar-jesus, or Elymas, withstood them, and sought to alienate the pro-consul from the faith. But when, by a powerful rebuke from Paul, the sorcerer was struck with blindness, the pro-consul recognised in that a testimony to the teaching of the apostles, and believed on the Lord. From Cyprus they crossed to Asia Minor, and travelled to Antioch in Pisidia. They visited the synagogue on the Sabbath, and Paul addressed the people, showing that in Jesus the Son of David the promised salvation of the world had appeared. - This address made a strong impression, especially on the heathen who were present, and Paul was asked to speak more fully on the subject the following Sabbath. On that day almost the whole city came together to hear him. This roused the jealousy of the Jews, they interrupted his discourse with vehement opposition. Then the apostles boldly said: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles." When the Gentiles heard this they rejoiced, and the word of the Lord was spread throughout the whole district. But the Jews raised an uproar and drove the apostles from the city. They proceeded to Iconium, and preached there also. Many Jews and Greeks believed, but the unbelieving Jews tried to stone the apostles; therefore they went on to Lystra. Here Paul gained such respect by the healing of a lame man, that the people took them for gods, and brought victims to sacrifice to them. They prevented them, and pointed them to the living God, the maker of heaven and earth. Soon, however, there came Jews from Antioch and

Iconium, who roused the people to stone Paul and cast him out of the city as dead. But while the disciples stood round him, he rose up and went into the city. The next day he went with Barnabas to Derbe, where they founded a church. Then they returned through the cities they had visited, and arrived in Antioch about the year 48.—Acts xiii., xiv.

145. After they had been some time labouring there, some Pharisaic zealots came down from Jerusalem and threw doubts on the salvation of the Gentile Christians. Paul and Barnabas had no small discussion with them, and the Church resolved to send its most esteemed teachers to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles and elders there about this question (50 A.D.). In this conference the believing Pharisees vehemently opposed Paul and Barnabas. But Peter reminded them that God himself had already decided the question. James, who was greatly respected for his strict observance of the law, agreed with him, but thought that, to reconcile differences, nothing should be demanded of the believing Gentiles but obedience to the Noachic commands. His opinion was unanimously adopted, and communicated to the Church in Antioch in a letter.—Acts xv. ; Gal. ii. 1-10.

146. After a short time (50 A.D.) Paul set out on a second journey with Silas. He went through Syria and Asia Minor, strengthening the churches already founded ; and it was his intention to confine his work to these countries. But the Spirit of God had a more extended field for him. A man of Macedonia appeared to him by night, and said : "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Paul recognised in this a distinct call from the Lord to pass over into Europe. In Philippi, the capital of Macedonia, he preached in the Jewish place of prayer. A proselyte

from Thyatira, named Lydia, was baptized, and her house then became the centre of the Church. But the hatred of the people was roused against the apostles by the masters of a woman from whom he had cast out a spirit of divination, and the magistrates had them thrown into prison. During the night Paul and Silas prayed. Then there was a great earthquake; the doors of the prison were opened, and their fetters fell off. The gaoler would have destroyed himself, thinking that all the prisoners were escaped. But the voice of Paul prevented him, and he came trembling to the apostles, saying: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thine house," instructed him and his household, and baptized them all. Next morning Paul gained honourable liberation by an appeal to his Roman citizenship.—Acts xv. 36—xvi.

147. Thessalonica and Berea were next visited in succession, and churches founded there; but the enmity of the Jews soon drove Paul from both these cities. He then came to Athens, the centre of heathen wisdom and religion. His preaching attracted attention, and they led him to the Areopagus that he might set forth his new doctrine there. Founding on an inscription he had observed on one of their altars, "To an unknown God," he proclaimed to them the God of heaven and earth, whom they had been seeking after in their heathenism, if haply they might feel after him and find him; and told them that the times of ignorance were now past, and that God was now calling all men to repentance, having appointed a day wherein He would judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, whom He had raised from the dead. When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some

mocked, others said they would hear him again, and a few believed.—Acts xvii.

148. From Athens Paul travelled to Corinth (52 A.D.), a flourishing commercial city, a seat of the sciences, but also a place of unbridled luxury. He first preached in the synagogue, and persuaded many Jews and Greeks. But when other Jews opposed him he said: "Your blood be upon your own heads, from henceforth I go unto the Gentiles," and thereafter taught in the house of one Justus, and the church increased daily. After a sojourn in Corinth of a year and a half, Paul set out on his return journey (54 A.D.) to Jerusalem. He took advantage of being there to come to a clear understanding with Peter, John, and James about his position and functions as the Apostle of the Gentiles, which was the more necessary as false brethren had been throwing discredit on his work. James, John, and Peter recognized unconditionally his apostolic authority, gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, and agreed that they should go to the Gentiles, while they themselves preached to the Jews. From Jerusalem Paul went to Antioch. Peter also came thither, and at first had no hesitation in eating with the Gentile Christians. But when some of the narrow-minded Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem, Peter, from fear of man, withdrew from all fellowship with the Gentile Christians, and led into the same hypocrisy other Jewish Christians in Antioch. Paul then manfully rebuked Peter before them all for his fear of man.—Acts xviii.; Gal. ii. 11-14.

149. Paul did not at this time remain long in Antioch. In the year 54 or 55 he set out on his third great Apostolic journey. After passing through Galatia and Phrygia he came to Ephesus. For three months he preached in the

synagogue, but, owing to Jewish opposition, he withdrew to the lecture-room of a Greek philosopher named Tyrannus, where he taught for two years. Not only was a numerous church founded in Ephesus itself, but a powerful influence was exercised upon the whole of the province of Asia. God confirmed his teaching by many signs and wonders; and the miserable failure of some who attempted to imitate his miraculous cures, drew a great fear upon all. Many who had practised magic arts renounced them utterly, and burnt their costly magical books to the value of about £1450. While Paul was preparing to leave Ephesus for Macedonia and Achaia, a great danger threatened him and the church. A goldsmith, named Demetrius, who carried on a considerable trade in little silver models of the famous Temple of Diana at Ephesus, and since Paul had begun to preach, had found his business decreasing, roused the people to great wrath against these blasphemers of their goddess. In their madness they rushed through the city into the theatre, and cried out for two hours together: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The town clerk, only with great pains and tact, succeeded in pacifying the wild multitude.—Acts xix.

150. Paul then proceeded to visit the churches in Macedonia, penetrated as far as Illyria (Rom. xv. 19), and then, after a three months' sojourn in Greece, especially in Corinth, returned through Macedonia to Asia Minor. From thence, after taking an affectionate farewell at Miletus of the elders of the Ephesian Church, he took ship to Cæsarea. There a prophet named Agabus foretold, in a symbol, his being made prisoner in Jerusalem. The brethren attempted to turn him from his purpose of going there, but in vain.—Acts xx.

151. The outward purpose of his journey to Jerusalem was to deliver the collection which he had made for the poor Christians in Jerusalem among the more wealthy churches of Asia Minor and Greece. Shortly after his arrival (58 A.D.), Paul gave an account to James and the elders of all that God had done by him among the Gentiles. They praised the Lord for all, but did not conceal from Paul that amongst the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem there was a feeling of hostility towards him, and advised him to prevent the outbreak of this spirit by associating himself with four poor men who had taken the Nazarite's vow, and undertaking the expenses of their offerings. Paul, who by no means considered the ceremonial law as a meaningless form, and observed it himself when it did not interfere with his work as the Apostle of the Gentiles, gladly agreed to this proposal. But while he was going through this duty some Jews from Asia saw him in the Temple, and roused the people against him, accusing him of having taught against the law, and even brought Greeks into the Temple. The people set upon him, and would have killed him, had not Lysias, the Tribune of the Roman Cohort, taken him from their hands and sent him bound into the castle. With his leave Paul attempted in a Hebrew address to defend himself before the people, describing to them his early life and his conversion. But when he came to speak of his mission to the Gentiles, they interrupted him with the wild cry—"Away with such a fellow from the earth, for it is not fit that he should live." The Tribune, who had understood nothing of all this, ordered him to be scourged, that he might make confession of his guilt, but withdrew the order when he learned that Paul possessed the rights of Roman citizenship. Next day, the Tribune brought Paul before

the Sanhedrim, hoping to get at the truth of the matter. A dispute at the outset with the high priest showed Paul how little likely he was to obtain justice there. Accordingly, he made use of the differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees, declaring himself a Pharisee. This had its effect. The Pharisees declared in his favour, and a fierce discussion arose in the council itself. The Tribune caused Paul to be taken away, and being informed of a conspiracy amongst the Jews against him, sent him at once under an escort to Cæsarea to the procurator Felix.—Acts xxi. 15; xxii.

152. The high priest was bent upon getting Paul into his own power. He went down to Cæsarea and represented the case to the procurator as belonging to the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrim. But Paul concisely stated the true position of the matter. Felix was convinced of his innocence, but detained him in custody, in the hope that Paul would give him money. The apostle made a deep impression upon him, and was often called before him, and permitted to speak of the faith of Christ. But worldliness prevailed at last. Thus two years passed till Felix was recalled. Porcius Festus came in his place. As Festus seemed inclined to agree to the wishes of the Jews, Paul felt himself compelled to appeal to Cæsar, and thus put a stop to their machinations. After some time, King Agrippa II. came to Cæsarea. Paul was brought before him, and narrated his history. Both Agrippa and Festus agreed that he might have been set free if he had not appealed to Cæsar.—Acts xxiv., xxv.

153. Paul was sent by the next opportunity to Rome. Luke, and perhaps others of his fellow-labourers, accompanied him. They sailed first to Asia Minor, and thence undertook at a late season of the year, contrary to Paul's

advice, a dangerous voyage to Italy. All hope of safety had been given up, but Paul kept up hope by his words and example. At last the ship was cast upon the island of Malta, and the whole crew saved. After spending three months in the island, they passed on to Rome. There Paul was entrusted to the care of the commander of the imperial guard, (61 A.D.,) who allowed him to hire a dwelling for himself, and go about teaching, accompanied by a soldier. He spoke, after some days, to the Jews. They received his preaching indifferently, but some of them were converted. Paul's trial was delayed two years, during which Paul preached without hindrance. After that his position grew worse. Several former friends withdrew from him, (2 Tim. iv. 10, 14, 16.) Soon after his first hearing before Nero, at which no definite sentence was pronounced, he wrote the 2d Epistle to Timothy, in which he looks forward to an early martyr's death. Probably in the beginning of the following year, (64,) the sentence was pronounced, and he was beheaded.—Acts xxvii., xxviii.

154. Of the later labours of the other Apostles we have little certain information, and that little concerns only the three most important of them—Peter, John, and James. Tradition is agreed that Peter suffered a martyr's death in Rome under Nero in the year 64, and on the cross as the Lord had foretold (John xxi. 18, 19). But from the time of the apostolic conference we have no information as to his labours, except that it appears from his first epistle that he spent some time in Babylon. According to a credible tradition he also visited Corinth, and came from thence to Rome. But that he was the founder and first bishop of the Church there is a pure fable. He cannot have arrived in Rome before the year 68.

After the churches in Asia Minor were deprived of their founder, John came to labour in Ephesus. He had not been long there, however, before he was banished to the island of Patmos, where he received the Revelation. After his liberation he returned to Ephesus, and laboured with fatherly anxiety for the welfare of the Asian churches about thirty years more, till his death in the reign of the Emperor Trajan.

James, the Lord's brother, the author of the epistle bearing his name, appears at the apostolic council as a prominent leader of the Church. He is the representative of the Jewish tendency in the Church in its evangelical purity, and laboured specially for the extension of the Church among the covenant people. He suffered a martyr's death at the hands of his own nation. The Jews, roused to fanaticism during Paul's last appearance in Jerusalem, demanded that he should blaspheme Christ from the roof of the Temple; but as he gave instead strong testimony of his faith, he was thrown down and stoned.

155. As the Church increased, and the eye-witnesses of the Lord's life were removed by death, the necessity arose for a fixed written record of the words and deeds of the Lord of which the apostles testified. First of all were written the Gospels of Matthew (himself an eyewitness) of Mark and Luke, (who wrote respectively under the apostolic authority of Peter and Paul), and, as a continuation of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles by Luke. Then, after a considerable interval, appeared the Gospel of John. These four Gospels, each with its own specific character, form together but one Gospel, in which a faithful and many-sided portrait of the Redeemer is presented to us as a support for our faith, an attraction for our love, and a pattern for our lives; while the Acts of the Apostles ac-

quaint us with the working of the Spirit of Christ, and furnish us in the labours of the apostles with a pattern of gospel preaching, and in the history of the first churches with examples to be followed and to be shunned.

Section III.

THE RECEPTION OF SALVATION IN THE CHURCH.

156. By the atoning death of Christ, eternal justice is satisfied; by His resurrection, life and immortality are brought to light; the sacraments are instituted, the Holy Spirit is poured out, the Church is founded, and the Word of God written. It remains now that the gospel be preached to all nations of the earth, that, like the leaven, it may penetrate and sanctify the whole lump of mankind. This is the work to be done during the present period of the world's history. The foundation for this work was laid during the apostolic period, but the post-apostolic age differs in some respects from that which preceded. For the growth of the Church during the apostolic period was fostered by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. Since then the Spirit works as a rule only by the ordinary means of grace, word, and sacrament. Miracles there are still, in the enlightening, justifying, and sanctifying of the sinner, the gradual but sure transformation of the world, the hearing of prayer, &c.; but they are miracles only for the eye of faith. Christianity is to conquer by its inward power, the world is to be overcome by faith.

The end of this period lies still in the future. It will come when the gospel has been preached among all nations, and salvation put within reach of all. Meanwhile, along with the kingdom of God, the kingdom of the prince of this world must be more fully developed that it may be ripened for judgment. The Church must, therefore, be always militant while this period lasts. She holds various positions in the struggle—now triumphant, now oppressed and persecuted; but she is always victorious, though outwardly she seems to be crushed, for by persecution she gains increase of inner strength.

Section 116.

THE FINAL COMPLETION OF REDEMPTION.

157. The *time* of the end is hidden from every creature (Mark xiii. 32, 33). But Scripture reveals to us the general conditions on which it depends, and the signs which shall announce it. The determination of the day and hour depends upon the all-wise will of God; but, at the same time, there are conditions which are so far in the hands of men—especially the preaching of the gospel in all the world—so that the hastening or hindering of the end depends in part upon the missionary zeal of the Church (Matt. xxiv. 14). With this is immediately connected the other condition (Rom. xi. 25, 26), that the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, and then that all Israel also shall have been saved. When these con-

ditions are fulfilled, it cannot be but that Christianity, before the end of all things comes, shall pour forth its richest blessings over the whole earth. This takes place in the so-called Millennium.

158. But the kingdom of darkness also shall have its time of apparent triumph, when the power of the kingdom of Christ shall be brought low. This is the reign of Antichrist, which shall immediately precede the Millennium. There are two manifestations of Antichrist spoken of: first, the harlot Babylon, in which false Christianity is concentrated in a false Church; and then the personal Antichrist—the man of sin, in whom ungodly worldly power reaches its consummation—2 Thes. ii. 3, ff. The same power appears in Revelation as the beast out of the bottomless pit (xi. 7), along with whom works, as his herald, the false prophet (the personification of the ungodly wisdom of the world). For a long time the Harlot and the Beast go hand in hand. But when she falls, the Beast and the false Prophet reign alone on the earth, and the suffering of the Church reaches its height. But for the elects' sake their time is shortened; and when the man of sin is revealed in his whole depravity, the Lord “shall destroy him with the brightness of His coming.”

159. After all these sufferings and struggles, the Church celebrates her most glorious earthly triumph, to show for once what Christianity can do in this earth. For a thousand years Satan is bound and his power ceases. The martyrs for the truth attain the first resurrection, and live and reign with Christ one thousand years. This is no visible and earthly reigning, but an invisible and heavenly, for heaven and earth are not perfected, nor *death destroyed*, nor the last judgment held; but the

effects of this heavenly reigning become visible upon the earth. Christianity receives unqualified recognition, and all departments of life are sanctified in the Lord. This triumph is still earthly, and therefore imperfect, attended by all the conditions and the struggles of the present earthly state. The power of evil is not yet destroyed, and when at the end of the thousand years its prince is again set free, it recovers all its old power. But it is the last gleam of an expiring flame. The "chaff" of nations, driven to all the four winds by the power of the Spirit during the Millennial period, are gathered again by Satan. But the fire which burns up the earth and the works that are therein, falls from heaven; the nations are consumed, and the devil who deceived them is thrown into the lake of fire, to be tormented day and night for ever and ever.—Rev. xx. 2-10.

160. Suddenly and unexpectedly shall the day of the Lord come, as a thief in the night, and in "the twinkling of an eye" the glorious results of His coming shall be accomplished. The dead shall arise, godly and ungodly alike; the former to life and blessedness, the latter to judgment and condemnation. Those who are then alive upon the earth shall put off everything earthly and corruptible. And there shall be new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. The eternal separation (judgment) is made between the just and the unjust, those who have believed in the Son of God and those who have not believed, and the world to come begins. The creature remains eternally either in full fellowship with God, or absolute separation from Him.

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